

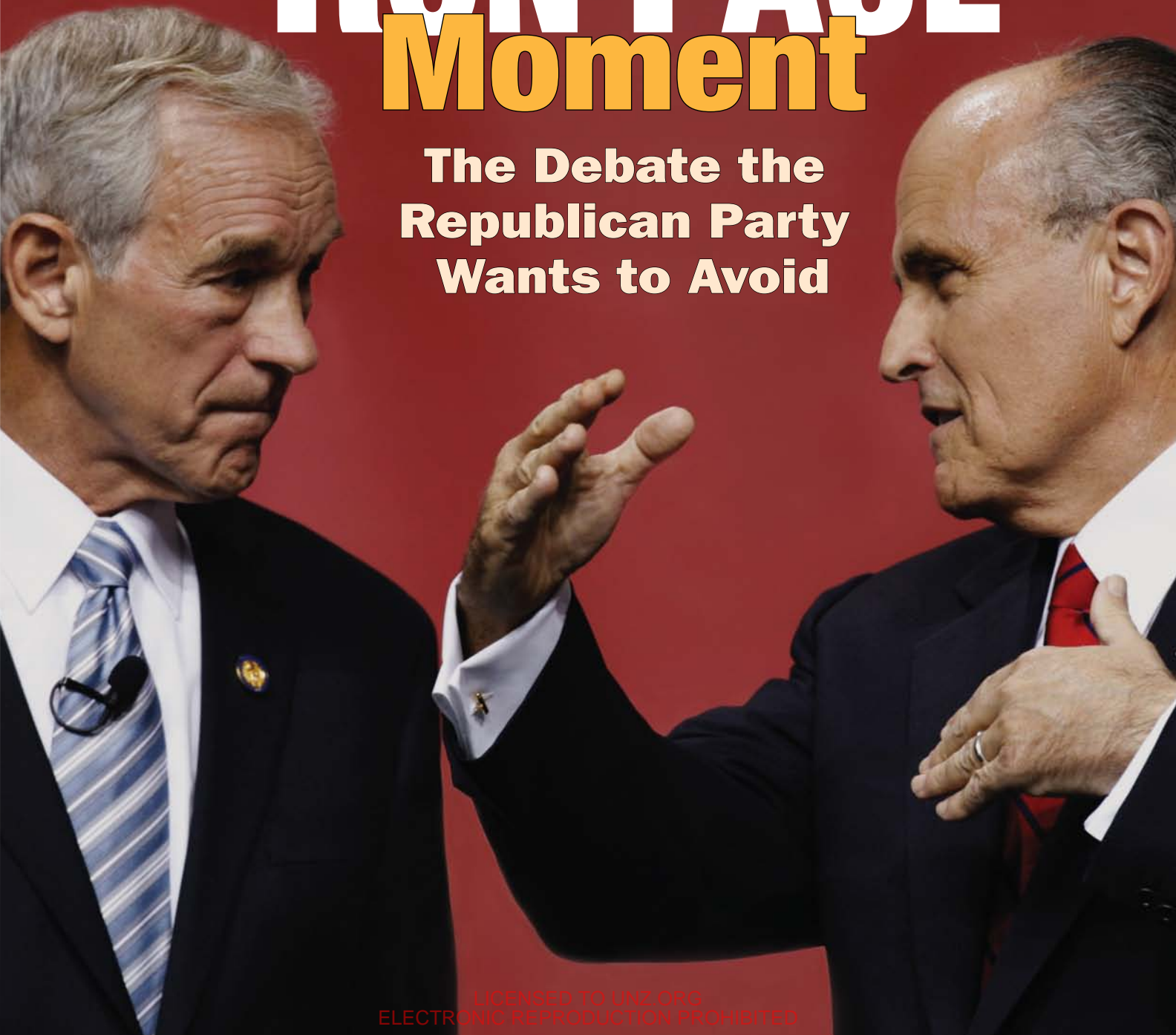
AMNESTY REPEATS ITSELF ■ FREDO'S BEDSIDE MANNER ■ MARKETING MITT

JUNE 18, 2007

# The American Conservative

## The **RON PAUL** Moment

**The Debate the  
Republican Party  
Wants to Avoid**



## ABANDONMENT ISSUES

Wilson Burman's "Doomed to Repeat" (May 21) is a typical example of taking leftist reporting on the Vietnam War and comparing it to the situation in Iraq today. I resent Burman's suggestion that a few words from David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* such as "corrupted" and "bribe" and "this particularly failed society" are relevant now in Baghdad.

In 1963, Halberstam was one of the most influential and ardent anti-Diem Saigon correspondents working for the *New York Times*. The media's constant reports labeling Diem's government corrupt and repressive of religious freedom in Saigon helped convince the Kennedy administration to abandon him. For the first time in our history, an American president conspired in the ouster of an ally in the middle of a common war against the communist enemy. Diem never believed for a moment America would betray him and abandon the Vietnamese people, who had chosen liberty. Unfortunately, Diem committed only this one mistake—believing in America. Winston Churchill once said, "In total war it is customary to shoot your enemies, not your friends."

The aftermath of the fall of Saigon is rarely covered by the mainstream media. Burman simply writes: "While parts of Southeast Asia weren't pretty after 1975, the warnings [of the Domino Theory] proved false..." I agree, the gruesome holocaust that took place in Cambodia was not "pretty," and Ho Chi Minh's soldiers conducting widespread arrests and executions to secure their totalitarian rule, building gulags all across South Vietnam where tens of thousands were sent to die, was not very "pretty" either. While Burman and his colleagues in the antiwar movement watched in silent approval, South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, and South Yemen fell into chaos to Soviet backed proxy "wars of liberation."

Congress's abandonment of the South Vietnamese people was wrong, dishonorable, and unforgivable. It led to massive slaughter and terror. Today it would be equally wrong and dishonorable to abandon the innocent men, women, and children of Iraq (who have been working with us) to the tender mercy of the terrorists. America cannot be seen running away again.

ED MOFFITT

*Hackettstown, N.J.*

## A PATRIOT'S MISTAKE

What makes Michael Scheuer's article "Al Qaeda's Waiting Game" (May 21) even more disturbing is the incentive we have given our enemies to strike again. Had the U.S. used the worldwide sympathy generated by 9/11 to broaden its alliances, increase its popularity, and pursue al-Qaeda unrelentingly, that organization would have been confronted with a situation in which their attack had only made America stronger and more dangerous—scarcely an incentive to repeat the mistake.

Instead, 9/11 caused a damaging autoimmune reaction: a bankrupting war, abandonment of important alliances, overstretch and demoralization of our Armed Forces, erosion of constitutional rights at home, and a precipitous loss of goodwill overseas. All this from an attack that cost our enemies only half a million dollars and fewer than 20 men! To anyone bent on America's diminution, this must count as an astounding success, to be emulated whenever possible.

From this perspective, Scheuer's "rendition" program must be seen as part of the problem. Rendition—a euphemism for American-directed torture in Third World dungeons—is undoubtedly one of Osama bin Laden's favorite parts of America's reaction to 9/11, allowing him as it does to cast himself as the nemesis of an evil empire and providing moral cover for his own organization's ghastly actions.

And what is the likely result of Scheuer's program for Americans captured by our enemies?

Beyond doubt Scheuer is a patriot who has nothing but the good of his country at heart. However, wisdom as well as passion must guide us in this fight.

JAMIL NASIR

*Gaithersburg, Md.*

## REDISTRIBUTE TAC

I'm a socialist. That being said, I saw a January copy of *The American Conservative* at the library today, and I thumbed through an article on the recent history of the Libertarian Party and its attempts to ally itself with various, larger political bodies. I admit that I was scanning the prose with an eye for glaring bias or fuzzy logic, and I was pretty excited to admit that the author seemed to have it together, that he seemed to have a pretty good eye for journalistic integrity.

Thank you for that! Wow. I feel like there aren't very many political periodicals these days with much integrity, other than *Christian Science Monitor* and, occasionally, *Democracy Now!* (technically a radio show, but they display their transcripts on their website). When I picked up a copy of *TAC* and realized I was reading something that tackled "conservative" issues (a nebulous term, admittedly) with a clear writing style and very little "party line" rhetoric, I was in love.

Thank you so much for your publication. I'll be keeping an eye out for articles, and I might even get a subscription if I like what I see!

ZAC (LAST NAME WITHHELD)

*Fairfax, Va.*

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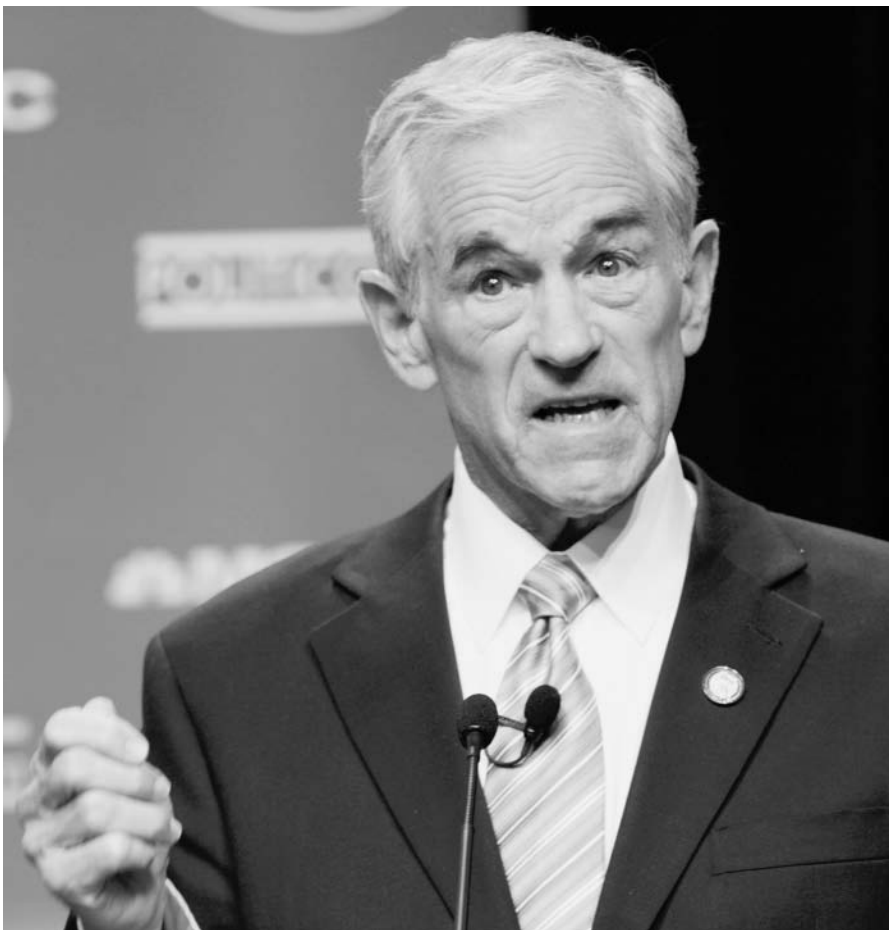
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## INVISIBLE ESCALATION

George W. Bush has finally won a war—though the opposition didn't put up much of a fight. When Congress attempted to tie troop withdrawal to Iraq funding, the president delighted in defying it. Democrats answered his veto with wounded speeches—then gave President Bush exactly what he wanted.

"We removed the arbitrary timetables for withdrawal and the restrictions on our military commanders," he rejoiced at a Rose Garden victory party. "[B]y voting for this bill, members of both parties show our troops ... that our country will support our servicemen and women."

Abiding by those "arbitrary" timetables would have supported the troops far more. For rather than the drawdown a majority of the country supports, just the opposite may occur. While the *New York Times* reports that Team Bush is discussing troop reductions in 2008, after analyzing deployment orders, Hearst News Service found that extending tours from 12 to 15 months, combined with a "little-noticed second surge," could result in a near doubling of combat troops in Iraq from 52,500 in January to as many as 98,000 by this year's end.

"Due to operational security, we cannot confirm or discuss military unit movements or schedules," Navy Lt. Jereal Dorsey told Hearst. How convenient for the commander in chief who has convinced himself that prolonging a war is winning.

[DIPLOMACY]

## CHENEY'S SCHEME

On Memorial Day, the U.S. held its first official face-to-face talks with Iran in nearly 30 years. Amb. Ryan Crocker met with his Iranian counterpart in Baghdad to discuss ways to increase security and end the civil war in Iraq. Underscoring the talks is a fact that many have overlooked as the catastrophe has deepened: Shi'ite



Iran has as much interest in destroying Sunni al-Qaeda as America does.

Support for this diplomatic opening comes from some of the non-crazy people in the Bush administration, a group that includes Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, intelligence chief Michael McConnell—and presumably President Bush himself.

But if Iran and the United States begin to co-operate in Iraq, where does that leave those pining for an eternal war against virtually the entire Muslim world? Scheming to prod Israel to ignite a war between the United States and Tehran before diplomacy has a chance to get rooted, according to Steve Clemons's highly respected Washington Note blog. Clemons reports that Vice President Cheney and his acolytes are laying the groundwork for an "end run" around any blossoming diplomatic process. Their tactic is to nudge Israel to launch a small-scale cruise-missile strike against the Iranian nuclear reactor at Natanz, anticipating Iranian retaliation against American forces in Iraq, thus sparking a U.S.-Iranian war. According to administration officials, Cheney believes that Bush can no longer be trusted to make the "right decision" about Iran, so he hopes to use Israel to constrain his options.

Whether or not Israel would play its assigned role in this widen-the-war

gambit, the proper name for Cheney's game is insubordination. The veep needs to be given a long list of low-level funerals in Asia and Africa to attend.

[ETHICS]

## TORTURE REFORM

The Army's promise to leave no man behind was put to the test as thousands of troops fanned out across the Iraqi countryside searching for three soldiers taken in a May 12 ambush. The enemy's strategy was clear: force Americans into a humbling game of hide-and-seek; rile the locals with house-to-house searches; draw troops off their usual patrols into more easily mined areas.

May 23 brought grim news: Pfc. Joseph Anzack Jr. had been found, floating in the Euphrates. Reuters reports, "The half-naked body had bullet wounds and bore signs of torture."

Death may have been the most merciful aspect of Private Anzack's ordeal; no one expected tenderness from these terrorists. But neither has the U.S. been willing to forswear their methods. At the most recent Republican debate, with the exception of John McCain, no candidate was troubled by what the Bush administration calls "enhanced interrogation techniques." "I would tell the people who had to do the interrogation to use every method they could think

of,” added Rudy Giuliani.

But men who don't make war from behind podiums take a different view. Two weeks ago, Gen. David Petraeus wrote, “Some may argue that we would be more effective if we sanctioned torture or other expedient methods to obtain information from the enemy. They would be wrong. Beyond the basic fact that such actions are illegal, history shows that they also are frequently neither useful nor necessary.” Since then the former commandant of the Marine Corps and the former chief of U.S. Central Command have published an op-ed headlined, “Torture Betrays Us and Breeds New Enemies.” The general who investigated atrocities at Abu Ghraib seconded their essay with a piece entitled “What Torture Cost Us.”

The answer: too much. It would be naïve to think that Private Anzack might have been spared if Petraeus and company had found their pens sooner. His captors' evil is their own. But a great nation has no business borrowing their shameful tactics. Those who wear the uniform understand this—and the men who would be commander in chief should yield to that superior standard.

#### [ELECTION]

### THEY ALL LOOK ALIKE

After spotting Ralph Reed at a Georgia fundraiser, Mitt Romney cluelessly announced, “Why, it's good to see Gary Bauer here.” The two men look nothing alike. The only thing they have in common is the ability—at least at one time—to shepherd members of the Religious Right toward the candidate they designate most Christian.

Romney's gaffe reveals that he, like many Republican contenders before him, appreciates the electoral clout of this constituency enough to kiss the right rings, but his engagement is so superficial that he can't tell them apart.

Former Bush official David Kuo made waves last fall when he admitted that

after courting evangelicals during the campaign, once the White House was in Republican hands, “Christian leaders received hugs and smiles in person and then were dismissed behind their backs and described as ‘ridiculous,’ ‘out of control,’ and just plain ‘goofy.’”

Religious conservatives complain when their candidates don't deliver their agenda, but they bear considerable blame for being so easily led. It's always a bad sign when your date calls you by the wrong name.

#### [CULTURE]

### SYRINGE OF DREAMS

Hank Aaron has announced that he will not be in attendance when Barry Bonds breaks his homerun record, and many baseball fans will likely turn their gaze from the site of Bonds trotting around the bases for number 756. The doping cloud still hangs over America's game, though Yankees DH Jason Giambi recently took a step toward dispelling it.

Well, sort of. He claimed that he was “wrong for doing that stuff” and “What we should have done a long time ago was stand up—players, ownership, everybody—and said: ‘We made a mistake.’”

He is a tarnished spokesman for the integrity of the game. After news of his connection with the BALCO scandal emerged in 2005, Giambi apologized multiple times yet never revealed what for. Coinciding with his “stuff” comments were allegations that Giambi tested positive for amphetamines. It's yet another say-it-ain't-so moment in baseball's long march back to respectability.

Bonds's record may never get an asterisk, but fans will attach stories of greatness corrupted to his and all other significant stats from the steroid era. America's pastime will survive, not because of league office decisions but because those who fill the stands want to cheer heroes rather than science experiments. ■

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# Taiwan Strait Talk

One hundred years ago, the most critical relationship on earth was between the world power and naval power Great Britain and the dominant power in Europe, the

Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II. The blazing issue was the decision by the kaiser and Admiral Tirpitz to build a High Seas Fleet to rival the Royal Navy.

With a vast overseas trade, colonies in Africa and Asia, and a hostile France and Russia with big navies, the kaiser's desire for a great fleet was understandable. But so, too, was Britain's alarm at the appearance of dreadnoughts in Kiel.

In 2007, perhaps the most important relationship is between the world power and naval power America and China, the Asian giant that aspires to be a world power.

America, by throwing open her \$13 trillion market and letting China run an annual trade surplus of \$233 billion, nearly 10 percent of China's GDP, has adopted engagement as a national policy. But there are now hard questions that need answering.

One was asked in Singapore in 2005 by Donald Rumsfeld. Noting China's deployment of 700 rockets opposite Taiwan, he asked, "If everyone agrees the question of Taiwan is going to be settled in a peaceful way, why this increase in ballistic missiles opposite Taiwan?"

Comes now the 2007 Pentagon report that makes for riveting reading. Beijing is building a road-mobile ICBM and has plans for five Jin-class submarines, which will each carry a dozen JL-2 ballistic missiles that have a range of 5,000 miles.

In January, China tested a satellite-killer ASAT by firing a missile into space and crashing a dead weather satellite. This capability puts at risk America's

eyes in the sky. Bill Gertz of the *Washington Times* reports, "China is also training large numbers of military computer hackers to deliver crippling electronic attacks on U.S. military and civilian computer networks." Beijing is said to be seeking to build an aircraft carrier to complement its submarine fleet and is developing long-range, precision-guided, anti-ship missiles.

Now one need not be a Clausewitz to see that China seems to be pursuing the theater dominance in the Taiwan Strait that JFK had in the Caribbean in the missile crisis, plus a strategic missile force to deter any American president from coming to the aid of Taiwan.

Why is China building up forces designed to fight the U.S. Navy when the United States is opposed to the independence of Taiwan and committed to a peaceful resolution of the issue?

Nor is this America's only complaint. Though China has decisive leverage with Pyongyang, she refused to use it to persuade Kim Jong-il not to test a nuclear device. And in the latest Strategic Economic Dialogue, we walked away with another bag of stale fortune cookies.

Now, behind America's grant of PNTR, permanent normal trading relations, lies a belief that China, though a one-party dictatorship, will develop a middle class and evolve into a responsible world power. And we will avoid what Britain and Germany failed to avoid a century ago.

But if China shares this vision, it makes no sense to risk a trade relation-

ship from which it benefits so immensely to throttle Taiwan, which would rupture ties to America, cause massive capital flight, and bring an end to China's economic miracle. And it would surely make no sense to try something like this before the Olympic Games of 2008, in which Beijing has invested so much to impress the world.

Perhaps China has concluded that America simply will not run the risk of war to save Taiwan from the fate of Hong Kong. Yet it would seem a mistake to think America could stand idle if China collared Taiwan and dragged her back to the embrace of the Motherland.

For their part, the Taiwanese appear to have decided to rely on us to maintain their independence. For they are engaged in business as usual with the mainland, thickening ties while maintaining but a modest defense effort.

With Nixon having conceded in 1972 that Taiwan is "a part of China," and Carter having abrogated the U.S. security treaty in 1979, while recognizing Beijing, the United States appeared to have accepted Taiwan's eventual return. But in 1979, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act, warning China against any use of force, and Bush said in 2001 that he would do "whatever it takes" to keep Taiwan free.

Hence, we have the kind of ambiguity that led the kaiser to think Britain would not intervene to stop a German invasion of France.

Ambiguity needs to give way to clarity. For neither of us can want a war in the Taiwan Strait or beyond.

After the Berlin Olympics of 1936, return of the Sudetenland was suddenly on the table. After the Beijing Olympics of 2008, return of Taiwan to China is likely to be back on the front burner. ■

# Lone Star

Maverick Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul finds that being right is the one thing his party won't forgive.

**By Michael Brendan Dougherty**

AT FIRST GLANCE, he looks like every other congressman in the Canon Building. His suit is dark. His tie is striped. He is convivial with his colleagues, who genuinely like him. But there is something different about Ron Paul.

You can hear congressmen when they walk down the hall, strutting their own importance. After all, there are regulations to be implemented, special interests to serve, a teetering American Empire that would collapse without their management. They wear black or cordovan leather shoes—captoes, wingtips, and brogues—clacking down the hall, their bellies full of medium-rare steak from Capital Grille. They are surrounded by ambitious interns and legislative aides. They fiddle with their BlackBerries. You can't miss them tromping out of the elevators.

Ron Paul is easy to overlook. He takes the stairs; he does not have an entourage. You can't hear him coming because he's wearing plain black tennis shoes. In a bag he carries a can of soup that he will heat for himself in the microwave in his office. Beneath pictures of Austrian economists Frederick Von Hayek and Ludwig Von Mises, he will eat his lunch alone and in peace.

What is the purpose of Ron Paul's candidacy for the presidency of the United States? Some longshots run because their egos demand it. Others want to raise their lecture fees. Some run because they have plenty of money and nothing better to do. Following a

flood of viewer requests, the Texas congressman recently appeared on Fox News to explain himself. His answer was buoyant though laconic: "I want to be president because I have this dream. I'd like to reinstate the Constitution and restore the Republic." His answer was also revolutionary.

Paul's doggedness in advancing the causes of individual responsibility and limited government could intimidate almost anyone who clings to the label "conservative" or "libertarian." Perhaps that is why he avoids those abused designations and calls himself a "constitutionalist." His philosophy is simple: "no government intervention, not in personal life, not in economic life, not in affairs of other nations."

Naturally he opposes almost everything Congress does. The physician cum congressman earned the nickname "Dr. No" early on. His opposition to what he considers unconstitutional spending even earned the grudging respect of GOP leaders. When Newt Gingrich cracked the whip on party members to support a messy budget compromise, he excused Paul from the duty to support the budget, and the "Ron Paul exemption" entered the congressional vocabulary. What did it take for other members to earn this privilege to buck the party? A voting record that opposed all unnecessary federal spending, even in their home district. No one else has been granted the exemption.

When Paul does propose legislation, it is simple, direct, and radical. He's compiled an impressive list of bills that remain ignored to this day. H.R.1146: To end membership of the United States in the United Nations. H.R.776: To provide that human life shall be deemed to exist from conception. H.R.1658: To ensure that the courts interpret the Constitution in the manner that the Framers intended.

His cheerful consistency doesn't end there. Paul not only votes against nearly all government spending, he has refused to be the beneficiary of it as well. As a physician specializing in obstetrics and gynecology, he has delivered over 4,000 babies. He accepted no money from Medicare or Medicaid, often working for free for needy patients. With his support, his five children finished school without subsidized federal student loans. He has refused a congressional pension.

Monetary policy is the issue that brought Paul into politics in the '70s. Having read deeply in the Austrian school of economics, he was incensed at Nixon for going off the gold standard and ran in a special House election in the 22nd district of Texas.

It still preoccupies him. Paul gave a thrill to surviving goldbugs in the first GOP debate this year when he referred to "sound money." Since bimetallism and William Jennings Bryan shuffled off the political stage, widespread passion about monetary policy has been in short supply. But for Paul, the issue is still one



that pits the people against the Beltway: “I think it’s very convenient for them [politicians] not to worry about it—whether they are spending money they don’t have for a war, whether you are liberal and like big welfare or a neoconservative and you like entitlements. They know somehow or another if the taxes come up short, there is a system, of course they know we borrow it and they complain about that, but I complain about the printing to pick up the shortfall. It’s such a serious problem.”

PAUL STATES PLAINLY, “I WANT THE **ANTIWAR POSITION TO BE TRADITIONAL, CONSERVATIVE, AND CONSTITUTIONAL** AND NOT ONLY FOR THE FAR LEFT.”

This is what he refers to as the “inflation tax.” With a paper currency, Paul says, “You get too many bubbles. And people suffer. Whether it’s the NASDAQ bubble or the housing bubble. It’s also the reason people are poor. ... There is this transfer of wealth from the poor to the middle class to the very wealthy. And it leads to conflict. There are lots of people in this country who haven’t had an increase in real wages in 30 years. The Republicans deny it. And the Democrats say, ‘Well we need more taxes on those who have too much.’ They tax productivity to give it to others. I would not immediately close the doors on the Federal Reserve. But the doors may get closed if there is a monetary crisis. There are no paper currencies that last for a long period of time.”

While he lost his first re-election to a Democrat, Paul came back to win in a 1978 rematch, then won again in 1980 and ’82. He later lost a 1984 Senate GOP primary to Phil Gramm. Not wanting to be a lifelong politician, he returned to the practice of medicine full time. Tom DeLay won his seat.

Paul ran as the Libertarian candidate for president in 1988, “just to talk to

about the issues” in his own recounting. He drew a meager 0.47 percent of the vote but found an enthusiastic following.

In 1995, he decided to run for the 14th Congressional district, which had been redrawn to include his home in Lake Jackson. His opponent, Greg Laughlin, despite being a recent Republican convert, received the support of the party establishment, including then Gov. George W. Bush. Paul’s return to congressional politics was based on the results of the ’94 Republican Revolution: “I thought,

‘Maybe they are serious and they will shrink the size of big government.’” Paul sighs recalling that burst of optimism, “but there was no truth to that.”

His second go-around in the capital focused on many of the same issues that animated his first tour. His principles never changed, though some of his libertarian supporters have been dismayed by his stands on trade deals and immigration.

While Paul considers himself a staunch free trader, he opposed CAFTA and deplored its predecessor, NAFTA. Paul explains, “I was on the side of the protectionists, and I’m not a protectionist. It’s not true free trade. It’s special-interest trade. It’s managed trade. ... I didn’t like the trade deal because it was another level of government and a loss of sovereignty.”

On immigration, Paul finds himself on the side of restrictionists. On LewRockwell.com, Paul outlined a six-step approach: 1) Physically secure the border. 2) Enforce current visa laws. 3) Reject amnesty. 4) End welfare state incentives to immigrants. 5) End birthright citizenship. 6) Standardize legal immigration rules and waiting periods. When ques-

tioned by *Reason* about what he’d say to libertarians who disagree with him, Paul was brusque: “If they don’t agree, they’d have to be anarchists, and I’m not. ... I do believe in a responsibility to protect our borders, rather than worrying about the border between North and South Korea or Iraq and Syria, and I think that’s a reasonable position.”

Increasingly, foreign intervention has come to dominate the political discourse. “I had concentrated on monetary policy,” Paul said. “Over the years I’ve learned to tie that in with the war policy. You can’t fight wars without inflation. You never have a war without inflation. ... The ’70s were hectic times. We had 15 percent inflation, interest rates went to 21 percent, we had the highest unemployment since the Depression. It came as a consequence of the philosophy of guns and butter. And of course the same thing exists today, except one thing is a lot worse: there are many more dollars circulating around the world, and we’ve lost our manufacturing base.”

Paul believes the Republican Party lost its way by not remaining the peace party. Recently, when speaking to a group of skeptical conservative journalists, he pointed out in his grandfatherly tone, “In 1952, Eisenhower ran as a peace candidate. In 1968, Nixon ran on obtaining peace with honor.” Paul also mentions that Bush won, in part, by touting a “humble foreign policy.” Even warmongers won elections that way: “Wilson ran on peace. FDR, same thing.”

When he is inevitably asked if he is running in the right party, Paul states plainly, “I don’t think the Democrats have any intention to change our policies in the Middle East. ... I want the antiwar position to be traditional, conservative, and constitutional and not only for the far Left. I don’t object to the Left being opposed to the war. But that Michael Moore image is not going to persuade housewives. I think a lot of



Republicans have forgotten their traditional position of being antiwar.”

Making the antiwar message broadly appealing may be difficult for Paul because of his temperament. The exchange between Paul and Rudy Giuliani in the South Carolina debate raised Paul’s profile nationally but was thought to have been the moment when Giuliani won the debate. After Paul explained that terrorists attack the U.S. not because they hate our freedoms but because they hate our policies, Giuliani rephrased his answer to suggest Paul thought America “invited” the attacks. He said he’d never heard such an idea and declared it “absurd.” Paul didn’t back down, but he gave a technical response about “blowback” that, while correct, didn’t connect with the audience emotionally. He was hit hard, and while he didn’t drop to the mat, he didn’t hit back.

At a press conference later, Paul presented a list of books to inform Giuliani that, indeed, policies do have consequences. On the list were the *9/11 Commission Report*, *Blowback* by Chalmers Johnson, and *Dying to Win* by Robert Pape. Michael Scheuer, former head of the CIA’s bin Laden unit and author of *Imperial Hubris* appeared alongside Paul. The press conference underscored both the strength and weakness of Paul’s personality as a candidate: his professorial approach makes it difficult to dismiss his views as “loony,” but the academic style doesn’t motivate people to rally to him. His manner is always refreshing but rarely stirring.

When asked how he would confront his opponents’ charges, Paul’s answers are as straight and flat as a Texas highway. “The media would love it if you got real, real personal. But I just have trouble drifting from the issue itself. ... I’m challenging them to think about policy. Nobody, liberals or conservatives, Republicans or Democrats wants to challenge overall Middle East policy.

It is sacred. There’s oil. There’s the neocon idea of spreading democracy. There’s Israel. You just shouldn’t dare challenge our eternal presence in the Middle East. So they attack the messenger in a personal way.”

When asked if any Republican constituents who had initially supported the war have thanked him for his foresight, he shrugs and says, “Some, but not too many. Someone told me once: ‘They never forgive you for being right. They’ll always forgive you for being wrong if you apologize.’”

Paul understands that electing him president wouldn’t by itself “reinstate the Constitution and restore the Republic.” He is a realist: “You just can’t turn one switch and solve every problem. You have to build coalitions. I’d put a lot of pressure on Congress to live up to their responsibilities.” He does know what he can do on day one of the Paul presidency. His first act would be to begin cleaning up the mess we’ve made in the Middle East: “What you could do in ten minutes to send a signal to the world that things

look at this mild-mannered physician and see the politician they’ve always wanted: a man of unbending conviction, of proven fidelity to a strict interpretation of the Constitution.

After his latest debate appearance, Ron Paul’s name leapt ahead of Paris Hilton in Google searches. Bill Maher, who had given him a tough time weeks earlier on his HBO show “Real Time,” became desperate to invite him back for this season’s finale, declaring “he’s my hero.”

Grover Norquist has said of the good doctor that in Congress “one Ron Paul is grand; and 218 Ron Pauls would be even grander; but 20 Ron Pauls could cripple the party since the usual half-steps toward less government and less taxation might not find support among the more ideologically rigorous.”

Fanatics, dreamers, and constitutionalists long for the day when hundreds of Ron Pauls disinterestedly discuss monetary policy and the philosophy of the founders each morning between the trees that line New Jersey and Independence Avenues. In the afternoon, they can go into

#### AFTER HIS LATEST DEBATE APPEARANCE, RON PAUL’S NAME LEAPT AHEAD OF PARIS HILTON IN GOOGLE SEARCHES.

were going to be different is tell the Navy to turn around and leave the shores of Iraq. We have two aircraft carriers there, another arriving, and seven ships that just moved into the Persian Gulf. I would just tell them to turn around and leave. Tell the region that this isn’t my approach, and I’m willing to talk. I think that would immediately raise our standing in the world tremendously.”

It’s a vision that will inevitably be ridiculed as naïve by the imperial intelligentsia who helped American into this mess. But it’s also so noble in its simplicity that it is already causing Americans who are tired of the warfare state to

the Capitol and maintain the Republic by leaving most of us alone. On weekends, they can fly home. We’ll even let them wear comfortable shoes if they want.

But until the day when scores of Ron Pauls overrun the Capitol Building in sneakers, we have one man who heats his own soup and fights for the Republic, not the Empire. If America elects him president, he’ll sit atop a bucking federal beast that withstood the taming of convinced small-government riders like Ronald Reagan and Calvin Coolidge. It would be a wild ride for the thin, unassuming Texan. He might never forgive us for putting him in the saddle. ■

# Stupid Party

Republicans rage against Ron Paul.

By Kara Hopkins

IT WAS A DANGEROUS NIGHT in South Carolina: the ten candidates for the Republican nomination gathered, and a debate broke out. Damage control was swift. Party elders rushed to excommunicate the instigator. Pundits howled, bloggers convulsed: “moonbat on Kool Aid,” “crackpot,” “cuckoo for Cocoa Puffs.”

But for all that pious fury, a candidate few Americans had heard of owned the next day's headlines. Ron Paul had committed the sin of truth—and the reaction revealed much about the party that shunned him.

The evening began predictably enough. Focus-grouped down to their ties, the heavyweights managed to attach conviction to issues they rarely think about, while a pack of also-rans nipped at their wingtips. The audience inserted polite applause. Then the play went off script.

Asked if bringing our troops home from Iraq was really a Republican position, Ron Paul countered, “There's a strong tradition of being antiwar in the Republican Party. It is the constitutional position.” Had 9/11 altered that, his questioner inquired. Paul responded that American foreign policy was a “major contributing factor. ... They attacked us because we've been over there; we've been bombing Iraq for 10 years...” The crowd went silent. “Are you suggesting that we invited the 9/11 attacks, sir?” A more packaged candidate would have prefaced his answer with a disclaimer—“Of course we did nothing to deserve the attacks.” Paul believes this, but he doesn't park on Madison Avenue. “I'm suggesting that we listen to the people who attacked us and the reason they did it...”

The party men could stand it no longer, and Rudy Giuliani volunteered to chasten the prodigal: “That's an extraordinary statement, as someone who lived through the attack of September 11, that we invited the attack because we were attacking Iraq. I don't think I've heard that before...” The audience thundered approval, and Rudy pressed his advantage: “I would ask the congressman to withdraw that comment and tell us that he didn't really mean that.”

But he did mean it—and gave no ground: “If we think we can do what we want around the world and not incite hatred, then we have a problem. They don't come here to attack us because we're rich and free. They come and they attack us because we're over there.”

The moderator declined to follow up and moved on to less disruptive subjects—for once the Confederate flag seemed safe—but Paul's inconvenient truth lingered in the air and led the coverage.

Less noted was the reaction of the crowd, Roman in its fervor. What were they applauding? Giuliani's sloganeering prowess? Or his profession of ignorance? Neither commends him—or them.

Believing that our enemies' motivation is beyond the scope of legitimate discussion should render Giuliani incapable of strategic analysis. Surely the old prosecutor doesn't think that discerning a felon's motive absolves him of the crime? He told Larry King that his plan for pacifying Iraq was to “Do it with more troops—maybe 100,000, 150,000 more.” But on what basis did he make that decision if realists who come within ten feet are ordered to recant?

The alternative is that Giuliani really is as remote from the facts as he claimed and was rejecting something he knows nothing about. Worse, he shouted down a more knowledgeable man.

Still the crowd downed that cocktail of arrogance and ignorance, delivering the loudest applause of the night and proving Alexander Pope's maxim: “shallow draughts intoxicate the brain.”

Beyond the hall, ovations rippled across the Republican ranks. Wrote Red-State's Rob Bluey: “If Giuliani goes on to capture the nomination, his response to Ron Paul will be one of the moments that is replayed years from now. It was so powerful that I found myself cheering him on in front of the TV.”

Other candidates clamored onto the bandwagon: “I thought Mayor Giuliani's intercession there was appropriate, and frankly, very, very excellent,” said John McCain. “I really appreciated it because we should never, never believe that we brought on this conflict. This is an evil force that is trying to destroy everything we stand for and believe in. And this is a transcendent struggle. That's why I want to be president of the United States.”

It's come to this. The party once known for its sobriety wants to be lulled with stories about evil forces and immaculate heroes. Prudence yields to utopianism, intellectual combat to blind thuggery. Gone are the wisemen who cast long shadows and wrote great books. Lost too is the Right's old default that distrusted power and those who want it, replaced by a vision of the irreproachable state.

There's an impoverished efficiency to this new regime. Millions take dictation from talk radio, keep I-hate-Barbra-Streisand books climbing the bestseller lists, and enjoy the nightly spectacle of Alan Colmes being waterboarded. The ideological contests that once provoked fierce infighting are settled: all that remains is to purge offenders and sell

the party line. “If Republicans start thinking like this, we’re dead,” radio talker Glenn Beck said of Paul’s dissent. If Republicans start thinking, they may realize that indignation isn’t argument.

“Ron Paul really has no business being on stage as a legitimate representative of Republicans,” Michelle Malkin told Fox’s John Gibson. She’s right—though not for the reason she thinks. Unwilling to engage the facts of Paul’s case, she made up her own, attempting to associate him with the 9/11 Truth Movement, which believes the U.S. was complicit in, or at least forewarned of, the terrorist attacks. Members of the group attended a Paul campaign event, but he has never endorsed their conspiracy theories. Malkin later admitted her error but not before denouncing “tin-foil hat wearers who indulge in this kind of fantasy, where America bears blame for global jihad.” No doubt a chorus of Republican faithful again cheered their TVs.

It’s vogueish to pronounce a “conservative crack-up,” but just the opposite is occurring. The once marginal tendency has won mass appeal—a kind of victory. But it had to leave behind that frontier where intellectual pioneers wrangled ideas scaled to the terrain. As the ranks swelled, the canon shrunk to a single issue that brooks no challenge. It fits comfortably into a Fox soundbite and finds followers aplenty. So powerful is the martial accord that anyone who disagrees must be something other than conservative: liberal, traitorous, mad.

There’s power in that consensus—and fragility. Einstein wrote, “He who joyfully marches to music in rank and file has already earned my contempt. He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would surely suffice.” Ron Paul proved that he has brain and backbone. But the party he’s bidding to lead has lost the ability to distinguish between a constitutionalist and a crackpot. ■

**President George W. Bush has made the decision not to attack Iran this year and will instead concentrate on both overt diplomacy and covert action to hinder its attempts to acquire nuclear weapons capability.**

The decision was made based on Karl Rove’s analysis that an attack on nuclear infrastructure in Iran would result in catastrophic U.S. gasoline prices, at least in the short run, which would damage Republican political prospects and would reduce Bush’s approval ratings to single digits. Per Rove, it would become impossible to pass any new legislation for the remainder of Bush’s term, and fading Republican hopes to hold the White House and regain Congress in 2008 would be severely damaged.

There is not a lot of confidence in the administration, particularly within the Department of Defense, that diplomacy will bear fruit, and several neoconservatives outside the administration are upset that President Bush has decided against any military attacks for the time being. Norman Podhoretz, editor of *Commentary*, has written an article conceding that the bombing of Iranian nuclear infrastructure would result in sky-high petroleum prices for a period but asserting nonetheless that Iran remains an existential threat to Israel and should be attacked by the United States.

President Bush also reportedly made the decision not to support bombing at the present time due to Defense Intelligence Agency analyses stating that engagement with Iran would doom any remaining chances of achieving stability in Iraq, given Iran’s presumed ability to mobilize Iraqi Shi’ite allies.

The last remaining war hawks are Vice President Dick Cheney and Elliott Abrams, at the National Security Council, who believe that Iran will have to be dealt with militarily before the administration ends its term, come what may. But short of an unforeseen *casus belli* in the Gulf, there is not going to be a military confrontation with Iran this year, although the Bush administration will ratchet up both political and economic pressure and will continue to carry out covert action aimed at regime change. Those efforts are unlikely to achieve positive results and may only postpone exercise of the military option against Iran until late in 2008.



**Anyone who doubts that terrorists are careful observers who can learn from their mistakes should pay attention to a recent website posting by a jihadi who calls himself Fahid al-Hadaithi.**

Al-Hadaithi is clearly the *nom de guerre* of a senior member of al-Qaeda who has posted on various terrorism-linked websites more than 500 times since February. Though not exactly the Ann Landers of terrorism, he has frequently provided advice to jihadis about how to organize effectively and operate safely. His latest posting advises would-be terrorists in Iraq to begin operating against U.S. forces as individual freelancers. Rather than looking for a group to join, he recommends that operations be conceived and carried out at the lowest possible level and with the least preparation. He correctly notes that the security services target terrorist organizations and are often successful in identifying them because even small cells operating together must communicate and have logistical needs that make them vulnerable to detection.

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# Amnesty Repeats Itself

The immigration package pushed by the Bush Administration is nothing new. It's been tried before—with results that now lobby for another round of legalization.

By Otis L. Graham Jr.

THE SENATE, with the help of a White House that knows a lot about policy blunders, seems to be on the verge of breaking its own record for unwise, unworkable, and nation-harming legislation as it considers substituting for last year's disastrous immigration "reform" bill (S. 2611) a new version (S. 1348) announced on May 16.

Not long ago, we knew what immigration reform looked like, when Barbara Jordan's congressionally established Commission on Immigration Reform issued its interim (1996) and final (1997) reports. The U.S. should decisively shift the qualifying criteria for legal immigrants from chain migration producing family reunification to skills useful to America, cut legal immigration by almost half to facilitate assimilation, and end illegal immigration with firm enforcement of employer sanctions. In her words, "Those who should get in, get in. Those who should be kept out, are kept out. And those who shouldn't be here will be required to leave."

That was, and still would be, immigration reform in the national interest. Now the Senate debates a proposal that is nearly the opposite: the eighth and largest immigration amnesty—illegals can jump through some hoops to buy it, but it is still amnesty—for 12 to 20 million, a new guest-worker program, and a large expansion of annual visas for workers—festooned with the usual gestures toward stronger enforcement. These are the basic components of a dauntingly

complicated bill: improbable things called Z visas, provisional legal status, fines, an English-language requirement, background checks for at least 12 million people carried out by our reliable Homeland Security bureaucrats, a brief return home for heads of families, and a new point system to slightly shift the selection priority toward skills (the only step in the right direction in 380 pages). These details keep getting tweaked, but the foundational principles underlying the Senate's version of reform are basically two, both profoundly wrong.

First, while kinship relations to recent immigrants will still play a major role in determining who gets our precious gift of citizenship, employers in the U.S. will have a greater role in picking the enlarged number of winners, based on their claims of a labor shortage, which is employers' 24/7/365 song.

Second, when a country has a problem with illegal immigration, it is because it is not letting enough foreigners in. Expand the number admitted until nobody needs to be illegal, and the problem goes away.

Versions of this concept of "immigration reform" have been with us for as long as we have endured George W. Bush. It was clear in the weeks before 9/11, when Bush and Vicente Fox proposed an open border with Mexico, that an ill-assorted but potent coalition of business executives, ethnic and religious lobbyists, immigration lawyers, and labor leaders (not their rank and

file) had decided to expand the immigration intake that the Jordan Commission judged to be much too large and also to pardon all the illegals in the country.

We have had a fierce debate over these grotesquely bad ideas for the past six years, and only a steadily growing mobilization of citizen anger and protest has prevented this bipartisan coalition from essentially raising the white flag on immigration and ending the century-long effort to regulate it. The public wants less immigration, rather than more, and illegal immigration stopped altogether. Apparently, few senators were paying attention to the objections directed against the various open-border proposals of McCain, Kennedy, Cornyn, Flake, Martinez, and company, but if you read the letters to editors over the past six years, the average American has been hearing the formidable critique that the critics of expansionism were making.

On illegal immigration, enforcement has not proven futile because it has never been tried. A resolute program of border and interior enforcement would bring about attrition of the illegal population by self-deportation, reducing the number of illegals from 20 million to manageable proportions in ten years. There is no *bona fide* labor shortage in any economic sector when wages and working conditions are allowed to improve in a functioning labor market. Our current immigrant flow is disproportionately made up of low-education



people who impose a net cost of \$18,000 to \$22,500 per household, and granting amnesty to 12 to 20 million illegals would cost \$3.6 trillion according to a recent Heritage Foundation report.

This “white flag” proposal and rationale brushes past these devastating critiques for a number of reasons, including the perceived self-interests of corporate and ethnic lobbies, politicians’ dreams of locking in the vote of the most fecund subset of society, and a growing disdain for the American working class deemed not as desirable (depending on the job) as Asians and Hispanics. And, apparently, amnesia. The Senate plan of this year and last year and on back flies in the face of our own historical experience.

As Rosemary Jencks of NumbersUSA testified before the House Immigration Subcommittee in April, all of the proposals in this month’s 380-page Senate bill were, in one form or another, built into America’s most embarrassing immigration policy failure, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. That law’s sponsors promised to end illegal immigration by penalizing employers in return for an amnesty (two, actually) that would “regularize” the 3 to 5 million illegals in the country and added an agricultural guest-worker program. The law’s chief architect, Sen. Alan Simpson, and some of his colleagues were suspicious. They were aware that they were trading a promise to do something the government had never done—enforce sanctions on employers—for permission to do something it would find easy—hand out legal papers. In view of these imminently reasonable doubts, Simpson asked for a “triggering” mechanism, a Legalization Commission to report to Congress after five years on whether border and workplace enforcement had sufficiently curbed illegal entry so that an amnesty could be

launched or further delayed. Atty. Gen. Ed Meese, who has recently apologized for being wrong, firmly objected, and the trigger was deleted.

Twenty-one years later, an illegal population of between 12 and 20 million has muscled into line to break American laws because the government broke their part of the “grand bargain.” The bureaucratic incompetence was stunning. The 1986 amnesty legalized 3.1 million, and an estimated 70 percent of these cases were fraudulent in one way or another, as the bureaucracy was overwhelmed. The same government that protected our borders after IRCA, that is handling our war in Iraq, that came to the rescue of New Orleans, and that is protecting our food supply from e-coli in spinach and Chinese pet food ingredients is promising to put enforcement first. You want a trigger? Our president will inform Congress that all’s well when a few more miles of fence and a few additional border patrol agents are hired, and let the party begin.

Performances of this kind have for years sent a loud message heard everywhere around the globe: if you can get into America, the government will either ignore your illegal presence or hatch up another amnesty—six more came in the years between 1994 and 2001. The border was a sieve and workplace enforcement was impossible given lawmakers’ refusal to require a secure national counterfeit-proof worker ID system and to devise real disincentives such as prison time and the proposed 3/10 Bar that prevents repeat offenders from ever entering the U.S. again.

This instructive and humiliating failure was crafted during the presidency of and signed into law by Ronald Reagan, but there was nothing conservative about it. Whatever else conservatism means, Edmund Burke classically put at the center of it the conviction that concrete human experi-

ence should serve as a more valued guide in making decisions than theories, predictions, or sentimental hopes. The Senate proposes to go down roads we have already traveled, and we know where they lead. The porous borders guaranteed by the false promises and bad judgments embodied in IRCA were there to permit the 9/11 terrorists to enter, re-enter, and use as a base the nation they planned to harm as savagely as their weapons permitted. Fool me once, shame on me. Fool me twice, more shame for both of us, for I am foolishly forgetting our history.

Somebody said that every time history repeats itself, the price goes up. Amnesty for 12 to 20 million and visas for their overseas relatives (the amnesties of 1986 brought in 5.2 overseas relatives per amnestied alien) plus 200,000 or 400,000 guest workers per year might be expected to be four to six times the estimated cost of the IRCA mistake, in dollars alone. It may be impossible to estimate, but is certainly impossible to doubt, that the costs to the taxpayer, the social fabric, and the rule of law will be go way, way up. If this unpopular, much protested, and disastrous measure slides through the political process, our government—president and both houses of Congress—will have either lied to us twice on two major turning points or proven colossally incompetent or both.

Time for a third party, even for an increase in income-tax evasion, more talk of sectional separatism in the southwest? The president and Senate are running, without public mandate or consent, a furtive grand experiment on American demography, culture, and labor markets. The price goes up. ■

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# La Raza's Lapdogs

Why the elite press won't report seriously on immigration

By Steve Sailer

DESPITE ITS TRADITION of editorializing in favor of openness and public participation, the prestige press offered virtually no complaints when the Senate recently voted to skip holding hearings on the convoluted "comprehensive immigration reform" package worked out behind closed doors by Sens. Ted Kennedy and John Kyl with Bush administration support. Nor did the mainstream media object when Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announced his intention to ram this vast concoction of highly debatable effect through the Senate in one week, a ploy that even Reid soon admitted was wrong.

You might think that our nation's elites would find immigration the single most fascinating domestic policy issue to explore. After all, besides ourselves, nothing is more interesting to us than other human beings. And few political questions would seem more compelling than which of the 6 billion foreigners we want to become our fellow citizens, neighbors, and, eventually, the ancestors of our descendants. Immigration policy directly affects nearly every other question of our day, from education and crime to economic inequality and healthcare costs.

Yet the national newspapers cover immigration with no more enthusiasm than they muster for local zoning board meetings. When they deign to discuss immigration at all, their approach is superficial and sentimental. Debate is routinely denounced as "divisive," as if democracy is the opposite of division. The palpable contempt the mainstream media radiates toward anyone well-

informed about immigration contributes to the vapidness of its coverage.

An insightful economist, writing under the protection of anonymity, recently pointed out: "Power today very largely consists of being able to define what criticisms are off the wall, over the top, and out to lunch. ... Those who wield it do not 'run the world.' Rather they can block significant changes that reduce their power."

There may be no better example of this than how the powerful treat informed analysis of illegal immigration.

For example, recall the Amnesty Baby Boom. What, you haven't heard of it? According to a 2002 study by demographers Laura E. Hill and Hans P. Johnson of the Public Policy Institute of California, due to the 1986 amnesty (another "comprehensive" compromise, combining legalization with enforcement provisions that were never enforced), "Between 1987 and 1991, total fertility rates for foreign-born Hispanics [in California] increased from 3.2 to 4.4" expected babies per woman over her lifetime. Why? "Many of those granted amnesty were joined later by spouses and relatives in the United States." This fertility explosion among former illegal aliens choked California's public schools, leading to the expenditure of over \$20 billion for construction of new school buildings by the Los Angeles school district alone.

It's not quite accurate to say that the PPIC study was tossed down the memory hole because it was never allowed out in the first place.

Why is respectable immigration reporting so one-sided, inane, and downright dull? Just as immigration is

tied into every domestic issue, the failure to examine immigration intelligently illuminates much that is wrong with American intellectual discourse in general. Here are some reasons for this sorry state of affairs:

1. An aversion to working with numbers is common among intellectuals and media types. For instance, it's of some relevance to crafting immigration policy to know that 5 billion people live in countries with lower average per capita GDPs than Mexico. About a fifth of the 135 million people in the world of Mexican descent now reside in America, and another 40 million Mexicans tell pollsters they'd like to immigrate here. That suggests that if the *Wall Street Journal* editorial board had its way, and there were a constitutional amendment declaring, "There shall be open borders," at least a billion foreigners would try to move here. At a minimum, this quick estimate suggests that the *WSJ*'s immigration views are mad. Yet these numbers are not at all well-known because few in public life have bothered to do the simple calculations required.

2. Views on illegal immigration may be the surest status symbol. A blithe attitude toward illegal immigration conveys your self-confidence that you don't have to worry about competition from Latin American peasants and that you can afford to insulate your children from their children. Moreover, your desire to keep down the wages of nannies, housekeepers, and pool boys by importing more cheap labor advertises that you are a member of the servant-employing upper-middle class.

3. While libertarians enjoy displaying their feelings of economic superiority—their Randian confidence that they can claw their way to the top of the heap no matter how overcrowded it gets—liberals feel that laxity on illegal immigration shows off their moral superiority. Celebrating diversity has been promoted for a generation now as the highest imaginable ethical value, so the ambitious compete to be seen espousing most fervently the reigning civic religion and damning most loudly any heretics who dare to speak up.

4. It is unfashionable to admit the existence of group statistical differences. The endless campaign in American society against stereotypes has reached the point that simple acts of pattern recognition demand reflexive debunking by citation of whatever contrary example is available. “Any exception disproves the tendency” appears to be the rule.

5. The media’s dislike of reporting on averages is exacerbated by its love for man-bites-dog stories. The illegal immigrant who graduates from Cal Tech is news because it doesn’t happen very often. In contrast, the consistently dismal performance of Latino students on average—by 12th grade, immigrants are five to six grade levels behind Anglo whites, while even American-born Hispanics trail by three to four grade levels—isn’t news because it’s boring and depressing.

6. Among the privileged, if a tree falls in the forest but it’s not reported in the *New York Times*, it never happened. For example, the best estimate is that the Latino crime rate is roughly triple the Anglo white rate, which would not come as much of a surprise to anybody who doesn’t live in a cave. Yet because the major media won’t note differences in mean crime rates by ethnicity, this fact is considered outside the limits of acceptable discussion of immigration.

7. Another class marker of elite discourse is not letting the dreary realities of daily life sully discussions of affairs of

state. Both average and elite Americans observe that the children and grandchildren of illegal immigrants are more likely to become disruptive students and to join street gangs, so they both try to find schools for their children far from them. While the typical citizen draws the additional lesson from this that our government should therefore work harder to enforce the laws against illegal immigration, inside the Beltway anyone noticing a connection between the personal and the political is looked down upon as a pathetic loser who needs help from his government.

8. For public consumption, you should act as if you believe that social construction is all powerful. We shouldn’t worry about who or how many come to America because we can mold anybody into anything. Yet at the same time that elites propound the moral superiority of con-

professional provocateurs in opinion journalism. In contrast, many reporters claim to deplore partisanship, so when those twin paragons of good judgment, Ted Kennedy and George W. Bush, team up to push a bipartisan “compromise,” the bigfoots are naturally on board.

11. Ethnic nostalgia is common among Catholic and Jewish pundits. For example, Tamar Jacoby dedicated her book *Reinventing the Melting Pot* to “Aunt Bea, who was the last living link to my family’s Ellis Island generation.” Jacoby’s support for mass immigration appears driven by resentment of those now long-dead “Anglo-Saxonists” who gave the fish eye to Aunt Bea back in Nineteen-Ought-Whatever. That American Jews today are in more danger from anti-Semitic immigrants than from WASPs is of little interest compared to re-fighting battles from the early 20th century.

#### AMONG THE PRIVILEGED, IF A **TREE FALLS IN THE FOREST** BUT IT’S **NOT REPORTED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES**, IT NEVER HAPPENED.

structionism over selectionism, they compete furiously to get their children into the most selective colleges.

9. That the chief supporters of “comprehensive immigration reform”—the president, corporate America, Democratic Party chieftains, the Catholic Church, race racketeers, the educartel, and big media—represent more or less what a ’60s radical would have decried as The Establishment does not raise doubts in the minds of contemporary wordsmiths. God may not always be on the side of the big battalions, but public intellectuals are these days.

10. Today, Republican vs. Democrat disputes use up most of the oxygen in the public square. The immigration debate doesn’t follow partisan lines, so it doesn’t attract much interest from the

12. Open borders enthusiasm often reflects covert hostility toward African-Americans. Hispanic illegal immigrants are slowly pushing African-Americans out of the most expensive cities, such as New York, which has been losing American-born blacks since 1979. And, let’s be frank, many affluent whites are happy to see African-Americans go. The Latino influx can create a temporary dip in the crime rate. Illegal immigrants generally arrive at too mature an age to get involved in youth street gangs—but their sons, who grow up feeling territorial about their mean streets, flock to gangs.

In summary, the influential treat immigration as another topic on which they can exhibit their superiority by being oblivious to the obvious. ■

# Battling Over What's Left

Will attachment to a losing war so marginalize neoliberals that their centrist influence is lost to the Democratic Party?

By Daniel Larison

"NEOLIBERALISM is a terrible word for an important movement," Charles Peters wrote in his preface to the "Neoliberal Manifesto" in the May 1983 issue of *The Washington Monthly*. As it is often used today, neoliberalism is still a terrible word for a dwindling and increasingly unpopular movement that is now haunted by its putative successes in economic and foreign policy. If neoconservatives were, in the famous formulation of Irving Kristol, "liberals mugged by reality," neoliberals might be described as liberals who sought to be more realistic in their approach to policy—though outsiders and opponents now associate neoliberalism with interventionist foreign policy and Democratic economic centrism. It is these latter associations that have tended to tar all of neoliberalism with the failures of that foreign-policy model and the disenchantment with New Democrat promises on free trade, and they threaten to drag down all of neoliberalism into the raging sea of intense Democratic antiwar sentiment and the rising economic populism embodied in the Senate election victories of Sherrod Brown and Jim Webb.

Both "neo" ideologies emerged in response to the limits and failures of liberalism, and both sought, in the words of Peters in a recent *Washington Monthly* interview, to "make government work better." At its inception, neoliberalism meant abandoning reflexive loyalty to such Democratic interest groups as

blacks and labor unions and also leaving behind knee-jerk leftist hostility to business and the military. Neoliberalism was supposed to entail a pragmatic and reformist approach to liberal ends—emphasizing entrepreneurship and competition in economic affairs ("Risk is indeed the essence of the movement," Peters wrote) while eschewing contempt for traditional "religious, patriotic and family values."

Some of its original features—support for conscription and calls for a new patronage system—seem bizarre, if not perverse, yet originally neoliberalism was not the caricature into which liberal interventionists and Democratic centrists transformed it over the past two decades. But by now the injuries caused by neoliberalism's association with the policies of centrists and interventionists will probably prove fatal, and an aggressive progressive movement may be preparing to take its place. At stake in this seemingly academic debate is the future of American liberalism, whose internecine fights are also directly relevant to the fortunes of American conservatism.

The argument between progressives and neoliberals, which we see played out in the rivalries among the leading Democratic presidential candidates—Edwards representing the former, Clinton the latter, and Obama attempting to split the difference—was encapsulated in the reaction to a recent declaration of neoliberalism's decline and fall. On March 11, the *New York Times's* David

Brooks wrote the movement's obituary in a column entitled "The Vanishing Neoliberal." He identified the last guttering flames with the rear-guard action by *The New Republic's* Peter Beinart and Marty Peretz to defend their support for the Iraq War—prior to their magazine's weak apology for supporting the invasion—and the interventionist consensus that *TNR* helped fashion with the "National Greatness" neoconservatives of *The Weekly Standard* (among them Brooks himself).

Brooks's characterization of neoliberalism and his declaration of its death elicited howls of protest from some of the neoliberal old guard, particularly *Slate* blogger Mickey Kaus, who had once been an editor at the other early neoliberal publication, *The Washington Monthly*. Kaus sought to preserve the meaning of the label as he understood it and distinguish the entitlement and tax reformism of his sort of neoliberalism from the hawkishness that became increasingly identified with other neoliberal pundits and politicians during the 1990s. Kaus cited Gary Hart as an early bearer of the neoliberal torch and remarked in an appearance on *bloggingheads.tv* that Hart's position was to be "left on warfare and right on welfare," an intriguing contrast to Beinart's call for a "muscular liberalism" and his efforts to glorify the activist internationalism of Harry Truman.

It's possible to conclude that hawkish *New Republic*-style neoliberals and



Clinton-era New Democrats, who were distinct from the older neoliberal movement, tarred the ideology with the sins of the neoconservatives, with whom they frequently sided in policy debates against progressives and conservatives alike. For the past 10 to 15 years, these neoliberals have guarded the left flank of the interventionist consensus, giving interventionist policies mainstream liberal cachet. In the process, these hawks ensured that neoliberalism would be discredited along with the grand neo-conservative project that these liberal hawks cheered.

The movement was originally designed to move liberalism away from crippling attachments to interest-group politics and the old welfare state following the blowout losses of Jimmy Carter and then Walter Mondale to Ronald Reagan. When it emerged in distinct form in the 1980s, it was centered around Charlie Peters's *Washington Monthly* and *The New Republic* of Michael Kinsley. The growth of another strand of neoliberalism could be seen in the creation of the Democratic Leadership Council (the so-called New Democrats) in 1985, of which Bill Clinton was an early member.

the way for a rising generation of neoliberal and centrist Democratic politicians, such as Paul Tsongas and Bill Clinton. Because they could represent themselves as moderates on taxes, spending, and cultural values and "responsible" on foreign policy (which meant that they were usually supportive of activist and internationalist policies), these New Democrats were able to exploit President Bush's collapsing popularity, the economic recession of 1991-92, and the debate over NAFTA without being pilloried as reckless or "weak" on national security. By stressing solidarity with middle-class interests and values and demonstrating a greater willingness to resist labor-union pressure and endorse free trade, Clinton was able to repackage the Democratic brand in a way that proved to be marginally attractive in 1992 and reasonably popular in succeeding years.

Yet given that the 1990s saw few Democratic political successes and many defeats at congressional and state levels and the early part of this decade saw still more humiliations, it is strange to see that the New Democrats retain as much influence and credibility as they do. Despite the complete failure of

Smith, author of *A Pact With the Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of the American Promise*, recently wrote on this puzzling problem in the *Washington Post*, noting that Democratic foreign-policy thinkers do not differ appreciably from President Bush in their goals or assumptions; they simply believe that Bush's execution and priorities are flawed. Smith wrote:

This is not a fringe group. Many prominent Democrats are PPI stalwarts, including Sens. Joseph R. Biden Jr., Evan Bayh, Thomas R. Carper and Hillary Rodham Clinton. Rep. Rahm Emanuel, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, published a book last year, 'The Plan: Big Ideas for America,' co-authored by Bruce Reed, editor of the PPI's magazine *Blueprint* and president of the DLC. ...

In fact, these neoliberals are nearly indistinguishable from the better-known neoconservatives. The neo-cons' think tank, the Project for the New American Century (PNAC), often salutes individuals within the PPI, and PPI members such as Marshall signed PNAC petitions endorsing the Iraq invasion. Weeks after 'With All Our Might' appeared, the *Weekly Standard*, virtually the PNAC house organ, gave it a thumbs-up review. And why not? The PPI and PNAC are tweedle-dum and tweedledee.

Neoliberalism enjoyed a new lease on life after the flameout of the Gore campaign in 2000 was blamed on the candidate's belated, stilted appeal to economic populism. The attacks of Sept. 11 and the Iraq War debate of late 2002 and early 2003 seemed to render progressives impotent and marginalized inside the Democratic Party. The failure of

IT IS AMUSING TO HEAR **INTERVENTIONISTS** THESE DAYS CONDEMNING THE REVIVAL OF THE "**PARTY OF MCGOVERN**," WHEN MCGOVERNITE FOREIGN POLICY IS NOT TO BE FOUND ANYWHERE IN THE **UPPER REACHES OF THE DEMOCRATIC ESTABLISHMENT**.

The Democratic Leadership Council and its think tank, the Public Policy Institute, were to politics and policy what *The Washington Monthly* and *New Republic* were to journalism. Democratic defeat in 1988 and the weaker Democratic presidential field created by President George Bush's tremendous popularity in the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War opened

neoliberal and centrist Democratic hawks to foresee and denounce the Iraq debacle, they remain deeply entrenched within Democratic foreign policy circles. It is amusing to hear interventionists these days condemning the revival of the "party of McGovern," when McGovernite foreign policy is not to be found anywhere in the upper reaches of the Democratic establishment. Tony

Howard Dean's insurgent, antiwar campaign seemed to confirm that relatively more progressive ideas (even when advanced by an otherwise centrist Democrat) did not have the confidence of most Democratic voters. With the deepening of the Iraq crisis, however, the "centrist" Democratic hawks—with whom the label neoliberal has come to be somewhat unfairly identified—suddenly found themselves on the defensive against a resurgent, passionate, and angry Left that found an increasingly important outlet in the blogosphere.

AS AN IDEOLOGY CLOSELY IDENTIFIED WITH THE **BOOMER GENERATION**, **NEOLIBERALISM** MUST SOON BEGIN TO **WANE EVER MORE RAPIDLY**, JUST AS ITS TWIN, **NEOCONSERVATISM**, HAS **ALREADY BEGUN TO PASS INTO HISTORY**.

Progressive bloggers took up the theme of the demise of neoliberalism with gusto, with some giving it credit for its past accomplishments (the Earned Income Tax Credit, for instance) and others declaring that neoliberalism had not done much of anything. Ezra Klein of *The American Prospect* took the latter view, arguing that neoliberalism had no real or lasting accomplishments to its name, and it is hard to imagine how someone with progressive priorities and policy views could come to any other conclusion. This precipitated a brief but pointed public controversy between Klein and Kaus, whose audience was probably limited to a select group of bloggers and political junkies, but which pointed to the much larger and more significant schism taking place on the American Left. Here the "generation gap" between neoliberals and progressives became quite clear: Kaus expressed impatience with the kids too young to remember the debacle that was the Carter administration, while Klein showed exuberant irrever-

ence for the old hands who had internalized the belief that the Left was in some ways a greater enemy for liberals than Republicans. Klein and other progressives today are not simply saying that neoliberalism was a practical failure, but more importantly that it was a mistake from the beginning.

A comparable example on the Right would be traditional conservative opposition to the "compassionate conservative" and neoconservative policies of the Bush administration. Not only do traditional conservatives view these policies

as poorly conceived and wrongheaded, but they see no real merit in them even when they might be said to have succeeded in achieving their stated goals. Similarly, the progressive-neoliberal conflict today is less an argument over the evidence of whether Clinton-era policies succeeded in achieving their aims than over whether those were the right things to pursue in the first place. This clash of visions is as deep-seated and intense as intra-conservative clashes over basic definitions and principles. What may come of all of this is a progressive Left that will no longer be lectured to and ruled over (or overruled) by those who favor the anemic, piecemeal approach that seems more politically viable but frequently proves to be deeply unsatisfying to core constituencies.

The situation parallels that of the mid- and late '90s, except now we have the rise of progressives as a meaningful political force under a very unpopular two-term Republican president instead of a very brief small-government, con-

stitutional conservative renaissance at the end of the first and start of the second Clinton term. Look how that ended. Centrist, consensus forces within the Republican Party managed to regain the initiative fairly quickly, and small-government conservatism was deemed not just unpopular but also, at least among neoconservatives and their allies, not even desirable. The abortive revolution of 1994 ended up creating the political dynamic within the GOP that brought us Bush and compassionate conservatism. Progressives should thus be extremely wary of their new burst of popularity within the Democratic Party since it is very likely that their brief empowerment will only serve as the means of electing a Democratic president in '08 or '12 who will once again marginalize, undermine, and betray their agenda—every bit as much as George W. Bush has done to the conservative agenda. If they are anything like some conservatives today, progressives will thank and love the president that does this to them.

It's too early to write off neoliberalism as dead just yet. But as a product of the 1980s and an ideology closely identified with the Boomer generation, neoliberalism must soon begin to wane ever more rapidly, just as its twin, neoconservatism, has already begun to pass into history. That does not mean that the last adherents of these ideologies will not put up a ferocious fight to hold on to the numerous positions and considerable power they have acquired over the years, but it does mean that the time of their preeminence is drawing to a close. Progressives and traditional conservatives can find at least one point of agreement: "It's about time." ■

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# Watching the Detectives

What were Gonzales and Card so desperate to hide?

By Glenn Greenwald

FROM OCTOBER 2003, when he joined the Bush Justice Department as deputy attorney general, until August 2005, when he resigned, James Comey loyally endorsed virtually every controversial and radical Bush policy. From the detention of American citizens without due process to warrantless eavesdropping, rendition, and the use of “enhanced interrogation techniques,” Comey was an integral member of the Bush DOJ team, helping to create unprecedented theories of executive power.

But by March 2004, the Bush administration was engaged in domestic surveillance activities—the nature and scope of which remain unknown—that were so patently illegal that even Comey and his boss, Atty. Gen. John Ashcroft, deemed them intolerable. As Comey revealed in dramatic testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee in early May, he and Ashcroft resolved to deny legal certification for the surveillance program although the DOJ had periodically certified legality since its inception in October 2001, and notwithstanding the fact that the program’s re-certification was of great personal importance to the president himself.

In his Senate testimony, Comey detailed a series of events arising from his and Ashcroft’s refusal that seemed lifted from a script of “The Sopranos.” Almost immediately after they made the decision not to re-certify, Ashcroft became gravely ill, was in intensive care at George Washington Hospital for a full week, and thus transferred his attorney general powers to Comey.

But when the White House learned from Comey that the DOJ would not certify the program, someone—Comey believes it was President Bush himself—called Mrs. Ashcroft, who had banned all visitors to her sick husband’s hospital room, to tell her that the president’s then Chief of Staff Andy Card and White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales were on their way to speak with Ashcroft about the matter. These frenetic events occurred the night before the program was required to be re-certified.

Upon learning of Card and Gonzales’s intent to “visit with” Ashcroft, Comey instructed his security detail to race to the hospital, sirens blaring, in order to prevent Gonzales and Card from coercing the signature of the gravely ill Ashcroft. Comey arrived to find what he described as a “disoriented” Ashcroft, unsure of time or place. He told *U.S. News and World Report* that as he waited for Gonzales and Card to arrive, he was thinking, “What am I going to do? What if they get him to sign something? Do I intervene physically?”

Moments later, Gonzales and Card barged in, ignored Comey, and instructed Ashcroft to sign the document they had brought with them. Comey described how Ashcroft “stunned” him by “lifting his head off the pillow and in very strong terms” refusing Gonzales and Card’s instruction, deftly summarizing the reasons he and Comey, the week earlier, had concluded that the program violated the law, and pointedly reminding them that Comey was acting attorney general with all powers of that office.

Moments after he and Gonzales left the hospital, Card telephoned Comey and demanded that he proceed immediately to the White House, something Comey said he was willing to do only after he had secured a trusted witness to meet him there. That night, Comey arrived at the White House and again rebuffed Card’s demands that the DOJ certify the legality of the surveillance program.

That is when Comey learned of a fact that disconcerted him to such an extent that he decided that moment to resign from the DOJ. Card informed him that President Bush, despite the unequivocal conclusion of his own Justice Department that the surveillance program was illegal, ordered the program to continue anyway.

Upon learning this, Comey, along with the rest of the top level of the DOJ—including FBI Director Robert Mueller, Office of Legal Counsel Director Jack Goldsmith, and Ashcroft himself—all agreed to resign *en masse*. Comey explained that they simply could not be part of an administration that was knowingly violating the law.

The threat of mass resignations eight months before the 2004 election captured the president’s attention in a way that the illegality of the program did not. The day following the hospital drama, Bush met privately with both Comey and Mueller and told them he would be amenable to any changes they wanted to the program in order to enable them to certify its legality. Only with those unknown changes in place did Ashcroft, Comey, and the DOJ thereafter certify.

It was that refashioned program that a federal court last August found to be in violation of both the criminal law and multiple provisions of the U.S. Constitution.

Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee had long sought Comey's testimony. Both the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* reported more than a year ago that there was considerable internal dissent at DOJ over the legality of Bush's warrantless eavesdropping activities, and those accounts specifically identified Ashcroft and Comey as the source of that conflict. As a result, in February 2006, the Judiciary Committee advised DOJ that it intended to question both men about their resistance.

But DOJ—now with Gonzales at the helm—refused to comply with that request and instead blocked the testimony by asserting various privileges that it claimed precluded Comey and Ashcroft from answering questions. To justify that decision, Gonzales told the *Washington Post*, “You have to wonder what could Messrs. Comey and Ashcroft add to the discussion.”

Self-evidently, Gonzales was well aware of exactly the revelations Comey and Ashcroft's testimony would produce, since he was at the center of those events. Yet for over a year, he successfully concealed this episode by claiming—falsely, to put it mildly—that neither had pertinent information.

Beyond the extraordinary revelation that the president's top officials thuggishly attempted, in Comey's words, “to take advantage of a very sick man,” and even beyond the startling news that the president ordered the continuation of a surveillance program that he knew to be against the law, there is the towering, still unresolved question of what exactly the Bush administration was doing that prompted such profound resistance from its own highly loyal Justice Department.

It is worth underscoring here that Ashcroft and Comey are about as far away from being ACLU activists as one can be. As but one illustrative example, Comey himself led the battle to block Jose Padilla, an American citizen detained on U.S. soil and imprisoned for years without charges, from even having access to lawyers. And it was Ashcroft and Comey who embraced extremely dubious legal theories in order to endorse the legality of the NSA eavesdropping program in the face of a long-standing criminal statute making it a felony, punishable by up to five years in prison, to eavesdrop on Americans without warrants. If Bush officials this radical and this loyal found the administration's activities to be so illegal as to compel their resignations, then, as former Office of Legal Counsel official Marty Lederman put it, “Can you imagine how bad it must have been?”

There has been much controversy over the NSA warrantless eavesdropping program ever since it was first revealed in December 2005. But the controversy has yielded very little knowledge concerning how the administration exercised these powers. On whom did they eavesdrop? For what purposes? How were the targets selected? What was done with the information obtained?

Throughout last year, a compliant Republican Congress blocked every effort to investigate those questions, while a bewilderingly meek Democratic Congress has, thus far, been content to be stonewalled. While we know that the administration eavesdropped on Americans in secret and in violation of the law, we know virtually nothing about the scope of that surveillance.

Comey's testimony, by providing new and dramatic information, not only serves to inject the NSA scandal with new blood, it also provides clues as to the possible nature of the secret surveillance, and further, it highlights several new questions that urgently demand answers.

Note that nowhere in Comey's story are NSA officials mentioned. But FBI Director Robert Mueller was a central player in the drama. He even met personally with President Bush. Mueller also threatened resignation. This indicates that, whatever was going on before the program was modified in order to satisfy the DOJ, those activities were being conducted by the FBI—the agency responsible for domestic surveillance—not just the NSA. That strongly suggests that the surveillance in question included purely domestic activities or exchanges, and not, as the administration has long insisted, solely communication between someone on U.S. soil and someone outside of the country.

There is one other aspect of Comey's testimony worth highlighting. When describing the events at the hospital, Comey included the following narrative:

I tried to see if I could help him get oriented. As I said, it wasn't clear that I had succeeded. I went out in the hallway. Spoke to Director Mueller by phone. He was on his way. I handed the phone to the head of the security detail and Director Mueller instructed the FBI agents present not to allow me to be removed from the room under any circumstances.

Consider what that says about this administration and how it operates. Not only did Comey think that he had to rush to the hospital room to protect Ashcroft from having a conniving Card and Gonzales manipulate his severe illness and confusion by coercing his signature on a document—behavior that is seen only in the worst cases of deceitful relatives pressuring a sick and confused person to sign a new will—but the administration's own FBI Director thought it was necessary to instruct his FBI agents not to allow Comey to be removed from the room.



Comey and Mueller were clearly both operating on the premise that Card and Gonzales were basically thugs. These are the most trusted intimates of the White House—the ones who are politically sympathetic to them and know them best—and they had to prepare for and defend themselves against extreme acts of corruption from the president's chief of staff and his then legal counsel (and current attorney general).

But the still more important issue here is that we should not have to speculate in this way about how the illegal eavesdropping powers were used. Americans enacted a law 30 years ago making it a felony for the government to eavesdrop on us without warrants, precisely because that power had been so severely and continuously abused. The president deliberately violated that law by eavesdropping in secret. Why do we still not know—a year and a half after this lawbreaking was revealed—whether these eavesdropping powers were abused? Is anyone in Congress investigating that question?

Given the deliberate lawbreaking Comey described, how is this not a major scandal? Even the *Washington Post* editorial board—long tepid, at best, concerning the NSA scandal—recognized that Comey has offered “an account of Bush administration lawlessness so shocking it would have been unbelievable coming from a less reputable source.”

There is simply no excuse for anything other than the immediate commencement of a criminal investigation by a special prosecutor. This is not a one-day or one-week scandal. Comey's revelations suggest transparent and deliberate felonies by our top government officials, not with regard to private and personal matters, but with regard to how our government spies on us. ■

*Glenn Greenwald is the author of How Would a Patriot Act? Defending American Values From the Bush Administration.*

# Make Room for Big Brother

Asia accomodates Beijing's rise.

By Todd Crowell

CHINA PERPLEXES. The United States knows how to deal with nuclear-armed countries, such as Britain and France, that are clearly friends and allies. It learned through painful trial and error how to deal with a nuclear-armed country, the Soviet Union, that was clearly an adversary. But how does one deal with a nuclear-armed country, China, that is neither a fast friend nor a clear adversary?

In groping to define a coherent policy toward China, it is probably inevitable that policy makers, pundits, and academicians fall back on familiar templates. The one that comes readily to mind is the Cold War paradigm, which demands a cordon of countries, most of them democratic, to contain China. John Mearsheimer, professor of political science at the University of Chicago, writes, “China's neighbors are certain to fear [China's] rise and they will do whatever they can to prevent it from achieving regional hegemony. In the end, they will join an American-led balancing coalition to check China's rise, much the same way Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and even China joined forces to contain the Soviet Union.”

But will they?

Unlike the old Soviet Union, China is not trying to export communism or any other ideology. Nor does it see itself as a protector of the large Chinese minorities in Southeast Asia. As far back as the

1970s, the late premier Zhou Enlai cautioned overseas Chinese to be loyal citizens of their adopted countries. From a historical perspective, the “communist threat” of the 1960s and 1970s as experienced by Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore has receded. A vicious Maoist insurgency wreaked havoc in Nepal until a recent ceasefire, and a weak communist insurgency continues to roil the Philippines. But Beijing disavows the former and ignores the latter.

Southeast Asian nations have done a complete about face, with a new respect for both China and their own ethnic Chinese minorities. For many years, governments in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand looked on their Chinese as a kind of fifth column intent on spreading communism and undermining their governments. A few years back, simply publishing a photograph that portrayed written Chinese characters could get your publication banned in Indonesia. Now the Chinese Lunar New Year is designated an official holiday. In Thailand, Chinese language classes proliferate, and there has been a rise in Thai-Chinese influence, not only in business and commerce, which has traditionally been the case, but also in politics and the bureaucracy.

Nor are China's leaders actively hostile to democracy—as long as it is practiced in someone else's country. The notion that the Asian democracies have

a natural affinity that will cause them to band together in some kind of anti-Chinese coalition is a fantasy, unless Beijing actively seeks to undermine their institutions. China's President Hu Jintao is pleased to speak before democratic assemblies. While President George W. Bush was extolling democracy in the abstract at a convention center in Japan during his trip to Asia in late 2005, President Hu was addressing the heart of Korean democracy, the National Assembly, and getting a standing ovation.

If the Cold War model doesn't work, how should we define the future of Asia? The Chinese have their own template that comes under the general heading of *hepin jueqi* or "peaceful rise." It is a term that Premier Wen Jiabao first used at Harvard in late 2003. But peaceful rise is nothing more than a slogan. If this seems anodyne and feel-good, there is

from neighboring states by devaluing. Recently, it signed a free-trade agreement with the ten countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and tolerates trade deficits with most of them. Meanwhile, it gracefully accepts tribute from South Korea in the form of conferring "Market Economy Status" on China, the first country with more than \$100 billion in trade with China to do so.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo paid a strangely fawning compliment to China during the East Asian Summit held in December in Cebu (from which the United States was excluded): "We are very happy to have China as our Big Brother in this region." She was not using the term "Big Brother" in the Orwellian context that is familiar to most educated Westerners. Rather, she was using the term in its Confucian sense of respect and deference to a benevolent elder. This was all the more

tance to governments that are found to be involved in systematic human-rights abuses such as political killings, although it has not invoked the amendment. China, of course, is under no such constraints.

Consider Cambodia, where Prime Minister Hun Sen has been getting a lot of static from non-governmental organizations and donor groups about alleged corruption in his government. They are on a crusade to end corruption by tying millions of dollars of aid to the government's willingness to curb graft and to stop its habit of locking up critical journalists. Hun Sen had to listen to them because donor groups have underwritten much of Cambodia's budget for the past decade since the first UN-monitored elections in 1991. Enter China with millions of dollars worth of assistance to build hydroelectric power plants and other infrastructure, providing roughly the same amount of developmental aid as Cambodia's traditional benefactors—no strings attached. Little wonder that Hun Sen has been effusive in praising China. Speaking at the inauguration of one of the Chinese-funded projects recently, he said, "The Chinese prime minister never orders Cambodia's prime minister to build this road or that. It's up to Cambodia what to do."

Shortly after the generals seized power in Thailand and ousted elected Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra in a coup d'état last September, the U.S. suspended \$24 million in bilateral military assistance. In the past, Thailand would have had to do without, at least until democracy was restored. This time China moved speedily to fill the gap by offering Thailand \$49 million in military assistance and training.

Soon thereafter, Washington announced that it would indeed continue to participate in the annual Cobra Gold joint military maneuvers with Thailand and several other nations, the largest

## PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO PAID A **STRANGELY FAWNING COMPLIMENT TO CHINA** DURING THE EAST ASIAN SUMMIT:

"WE ARE VERY HAPPY TO HAVE **CHINA AS OUR BIG BROTHER** IN THIS REGION."

another model to put forth. Call it the Emerging Confucian World Order or, to be more exact, the re-emergence of the Confucian World Order, since in fact Asia is simply reverting to the order of nations that existed before the era of European colonialism—with China at the center.

As it did during the Ming Dynasty years, the height of the tributary system, China confers the boon of trade and foreign aid on the nations on its periphery and receives tribute in return. Nothing was more welcome in Southeast Asia than Beijing's decision during the 1997-98 Asian Financial Crisis to maintain its currency's peg to the dollar, resisting the temptation to snatch trade advantages

unusual because the Philippines is not a Confucian culture. Never mind. Throughout much of non-Confucian Southeast Asia, China is now perceived as a benevolent Big Brother in contrast to the United States, which is too often seen as a Big Scold.

Arroyo had reason to be enthusiastic. In September, Beijing had announced its intention to extend a \$2 billion loan to the Philippines with no conditions attached. More to the point, there were no rude concerns raised about the epidemic of extra-judicial killings in her country attributed to rogue elements in the army and police. Technically, the U.S. is barred by the Leahy Amendment from providing military and police assis-

such exercises in Southeast Asia. There had been some doubt whether the United States would take part in the exercise this year in order to show its displeasure with the coup. But that was before it learned that China was offering military assistance—and especially after China put out feelers to Southeast Asia to hold their own joint military exercises or training.

### CHINA'S AID COMES WITH NO APPARENT STRINGS ATTACHED, NO HECTORING TO EXPAND DEMOCRACY, IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS, OR OPEN MARKETS FURTHER.

So it goes. With China's rapid rise, Asian governments are increasingly able to pick and choose between engagement with the U.S. and with China. Given a choice, many might prefer to deal with Beijing since China's aid comes with no apparent strings attached, no hectoring to expand democracy, improve human rights, or open markets further. To be sure, most Southeast Asian countries are not yet ready to throw themselves entirely into China's welcoming embrace. Memories of Communist China's support for local communist insurgencies still linger, as do uncertainties about Beijing's long-term goals. And the region still welcomes the United States as a potential counterweight to China's influence.

Nevertheless, American foreign policy in the region is increasingly confronted with choices it has never had to face. Should it try to maintain the high ground in accordance with its ideals—and see its influence steadily drain away? Or should it compete on China's terms? These days many Asian nations are finding they prefer to deal with Big Brother.

In Northeast Asia, the animosity between China and Japan can easily be read in Confucian terms. Ostensibly, the discord is rooted in interpretations of

Asia's modern history. In China's view, Japan has not shown sufficient remorse for its aggression during World War II. This, it is said, is reflected in how the war is portrayed in its history books and in the regular visits that former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi made to the Yasukuni Shrine. The shrine not only honors Japan's 2.5 million dead in several wars but also the spirits of some 14

generals who were convicted of war crimes in the tribunal after the war. Japan's apologies for its wartime actions constitute a modern version of the kowtow. The prime minister's regular visits to the Yasukuni Shrine are, for Japan, the anti-kowtow. Tokyo can never make a sincere enough apology since to do that would put Japan on a morally level plane with China. From Beijing's point of view, that cannot be allowed.

But then Japan never was a model vassal. The current war of words echoes sentiments going back to the 14th century when the Chinese Emperor Hungwu addressed the Japanese sovereign as "you stupid eastern barbarian," to which the Japanese Ashikaga shogun replied in kind: "Heaven and earth are vast; they are not monopolized by one ruler." China and Japan have been rivals for hundreds of years. It should not be surprising that they are still jockeying for primacy. In Confucian terms somebody has to be big brother, and the other has to be little brother.

On the other hand, the Korean Kingdom was a model tributary state for 500 years, stretching from the late Ming to the end of the Qing Dynasty. The Koreans paid their annual tribute even more regularly than the other tributary states,

such as Vietnam, Burma, and Siam. No other country in Asia, not even Japan, was so completely absorbed into the Confucian system. Today South Korea is moving perceptibly into China's orbit. The only question is whether the trend is reversible. This development may come as a shock to many Americans who think that the U.S.-South Korean alliance was cemented in blood because of the common defense against the North Korean invasion in 1950. Remnants of the 1950s system remain in place: some 32,000 American troops are still stationed in the South under terms of the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty. But the political tectonic plates in Asia are clearly shifting, perhaps for the first time since the beginning of the Cold War.

Many are reluctant to give up the Cold War paradigm because the alternative seems to leave little place for the United States. A taste of what awaits came at the East Asian Summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2005 to which Washington was pointedly not invited but took its exclusion well.

It will be in America's interests to give way gracefully, preserving the goodwill of the countries that make up the continent of Asia while maintaining an off-shore presence through its continuing alliance with Japan and bases in the Pacific. ■

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# Viereck Revisited

The philosopher-poet christened conservatism—then failed its litmus tests.

By Daniel McCarthy

PETER VIERECK has been called, with good reason, “the first conservative.” His 1949 book *Conservatism Revisited* was the first post-World War II effort to rehabilitate the c-word, which until then had been almost exclusively a pejorative in American politics. Viereck embraced not only the term but also one of its most vilified exemplars, the 19th-century Austrian statesman Klemens von Metternich. Viereck found in Metternich’s aristocratic internationalism and Tory socialism—Metternich had called himself a *socialiste conservateur*—an attractive alternative to classical and modern liberalisms and to Nazi and Communist totalitarianisms.

Viereck was more than just a political thinker, however. He was also a perceptive social critic and a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet for another 1949 book, *Terror and Decorum*. He came from illustrious, albeit dubious, roots: his father, George Sylvester, a noted poet himself, was one of Germany’s leading apologists in the U.S. during both World Wars and was eventually jailed for espionage. His grandfather Louis had been an acquaintance of Karl Marx and a socialist deputy in the Reichstag. Louis was implicated in an assassination attempt against his own probable father, Kaiser Wilhelm I. (The official story held that Louis was the son of another Hohenzollern, Louis von Prillwitz, but his mother was known to be the kaiser’s mistress as well.)

He inherited more than a little of the Hohenzollern temperament, but Peter Viereck’s life, by comparison with his forefathers’, seems almost sedate: after

serving in World War II—as an enlisted man, since his father’s German ties precluded Viereck’s becoming an officer—and his brush with political and poetic fame after 1949, Viereck settled down to the life of a scholar, teaching history for most of the next half-century at Mount Holyoke College. He was married three times, twice to the same woman, Anya de Markov, whom he met in Italy during the war. He divorced her twice, too, later marrying Betty Falkenberg, a writer for the *International Herald Tribune* and *Partisan Review*, among other journals.

When Viereck died on May 13 of last year, the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, and several of Britain’s left-of-center broadsheets ran obituaries of several hundred words apiece for the late professor, poet, and political philosopher. It was more notice than he had received in decades—apart, that is, from a 6,000-word profile the year before in *The New Yorker*. But that piece, claimed *National Review*’s John J. Miller, had just been a ploy by liberal journalist Tom Reiss to highlight a dissident conservative in order to score points against President Bush. Miller dismissed Reiss’s contention that Viereck had “been erased from the picture” of the Right’s origins “like an early Bolshevik fallen out of favor.” On the contrary, wrote Miller, “Viereck is remembered almost exclusively by conservatives.” A year later, Miller’s magazine showed just how well it remembered Viereck—with a single-paragraph obituary of 164 words.

At the time of his death, Viereck evidently had more admirers on the Left

than on the Right. That had probably been true for some time: after all, Viereck was the only professed conservative invited to contribute to Daniel Bell’s 1955 anti-McCarthyite anthology, *The New Right* (later re-titled *The Radical Right*). And while other conservatives of the 1950s looked to Sen. Robert Taft as the alternative to the “modern Republican” Eisenhower, Viereck found his conservative paragon in Adlai Stevenson. Even the work that made Viereck’s name as a conservative, 1949’s *Conservatism Revisited*, bid fair to unmake that name in its revised 1962 edition, in which he added a second “book,” *The New Conservatism—What Went Wrong?* that criticized every manifestation of right-wing sensibility from Southern agrarianism to libertarianism—and above all “thought-control nationalism,” Viereck’s term for the admixture of McCarthyism and militarism that he felt characterized much of the postwar Right.

“He runs with the hares of the established fashion which writes off all opposition to the prevailing Liberal orthodoxy as the psychological resentment of unadjusted neurotics,” wrote Frank Meyer in 1955. “Viereck is not the first, nor will he be the last, to succeed in passing off his unexceptionably Liberal sentiments as conservatism.” Today it might seem abundantly obvious that Viereck—defender of the New Deal and of trade unionism, who thought “the finest conservative episode in American history, since the miracle of *The Federalist Papers*, is the 1952 cam-



paign of Adlai Stevenson”—was no conservative. But in 1955, the year that Louis Hartz’s *Liberal Tradition in America* proclaimed that the United States had never had—nor could have—any tradition but liberalism, the meaning of American conservatism was far from settled. Meyer, an ex-Communist turned Cold Warrior with a libertarian streak, consciously set out to erect an orthodoxy, to define *The Conservative Mainstream* (the title of one of his essay collections). Viereck’s own attempt to define conservatism came years before Meyer’s, at a time when Robert Taft still called himself a (classical) liberal and William F. Buckley Jr. preferred the term “individualist.”

Viereck could, and did, cite a long line of distinguished Anglo-American conservatives in support of his claim that “Since the industrial revolution, conservatism is neither justifiable nor effective unless it has roots in the factories and trade unions”—not only Disraeli, but “Coleridge, Carlyle, Newman, Ruskin, Arnold, Melville.” Viereck’s economics may have been unsound—like many critics of capitalism, Viereck’s work betrays little familiarity with economic thought after Adam Smith and Karl Marx—but it could hardly be called unconservative. As for Adlai Stevenson, Viereck noted that Eisenhower’s Democratic opponent identified himself with conservatism before any politician of the postwar Right did. Stevenson had said in 1952,

The strange alchemy of time has somehow converted the Democrats into the truly conservative party of this country—the party dedicated to conserving all that is best, and building solidly and safely on these foundations. The Republicans, by contrast, are behaving like the radical party—the party of the reckless and the embittered, bent on dis-

mantling institutions [i.e., those of the New Deal] which have been built solidly into our social fabric.

For Viereck, Cold War conservatism was the real imposture. “The historic content of conservatism stands, above all, for two things: organic unity and rooted liberty,” he wrote. “Today the shell of the ‘conservative’ label has become a chrysalis for the opposite of these two things: at best for atomistic Manchester liberalism ... at worst for thought-controlling nationalism, uprooting the traditional liberties (including the 5th Amendment) planned by America’s founders.” To critics on the Right like Frank Meyer, he admonished, “children, don’t oversimplify, don’t pigeonhole; allow for pluralistic overlappings that defy abstract blueprints and labels.” His rejoinder to Louis Hartz was to observe that “history has provided America with a shared liberal-conservative base more liberal than European continental conservatives and more conservative than European continental liberals.”

Yet European political traditions, more than America’s own, shaped Viereck’s political philosophy. Already by 1940, that philosophy had begun to congeal. That year, Viereck—“twenty-three years of age, unemployed, short of cash” and recently graduated from Harvard and Oxford—published “But—I’m a Conservative!” in the *Atlantic Monthly*. Therein he criticized both right-wing Liberty Leaguers and those fellow-traveling liberals who insisted, in the words of *The Nation*, that “the Soviet Union continues as always to be a bulwark against war and aggression.” But his greatest concern was with the Nazis and Communists against whom he saw wet liberals and hidebound capitalists alike as equally ineffective. “The success of ... ‘National Socialists’ whether Hitler or Stalin, is in their voter-getting synthesis of romantic expansive

nationalism with a planned economy,” he wrote. “In contrast, we conservatives must synthesize the good in the latter, not with despotism, but with freedom—that is, with all our ancient civil liberties, tolerance of minorities, and a peaceful internationalism of Law.”

Nine years later, in *Conservatism Revisited*, Viereck expanded on his beliefs and chose as their epitome a “good European,” Prince Metternich. He admired the Austrian as the man whose prudent internationalism had extinguished, for a time at least, the nationalist fires threatening to engulf Europe. “The theme” of *Conservatism Revisited*, wrote Viereck, “is the last stand of western oneness—‘cosmopolite’ was Metternich’s favorite adjective—against the mass men of nationalism. And, on the other flank, against the mass-men of class-war radicalism.” Through the Concert of Europe, Metternich secured the continent nearly a century of peace—“no lengthy wars nor widespread general wars between 1815 and 1914”—though Viereck had mixed feelings about Metternich’s accomplishments within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The repressive measures taken at his behest against nationalist German liberals inflicted grievous collateral damage on bourgeois liberals, too. The latter should have been Metternich’s natural allies, Viereck thought, “for both sought a peaceful and ethical and cosmopolitan Europe. They should have joined their respective half-truths against the whole-lies of their real enemies: the self-styled realists of anti-ethical *Realpolitik*, the racists, the militarists, the war-planning Irredentists.”

In a healthy, stable order, “moderate liberals and moderate conservatives agree” on many things, Viereck insisted. “Mill and Burke are not opposites,” especially when confronted by radicals of the Left or Right. He was particularly sympathetic to Mill’s warning that “the inevitable growth of social equality and

of the government of public opinion should impose on mankind an oppressive yoke of conformity." For Viereck, tradition itself safeguarded individualism against the tyranny of the majority over opinion: "To prevent majority rule from becoming majority despotism, every stable society has certain traditional institutions acting as breaks on precipitous mass action." He also emphasized the importance of "tolerance for individual divergences in art as in politics, in religion as in personality," noting in particular that "religion" is a house with many mansions, finding room not only for literal but for symbolic interpretations of church dogma." Here, too, Metternich provided a model, as a paradoxical "*homme d'église*," a free and strict Catholic."

Viereck contrasted Metternich's Catholicism with the rampant paganism of the fascists, and he observed that Europe's atheistic and anticlerical liberals "had undermined their own best protection: the dikes of religious ethics which guard both liberal and conservative democracy against amoral statism." Without religious ethics, modern men became "Neanderthals with high I.Q.; giggling apes playing at snowball-fights with atom bombs; efficient barbarians applying to uncivilized ends the subtlest technical achievements of civilization." Yet Viereck recognized that an implacable critic of religion, Friedrich Nietzsche, had been "perhaps the first to diagnose the modern mass-man. He associated him with nationalism and with worship of quantity and power, as opposed to quality and thought." Nietzsche, too, was a touchstone of Viereck's philosophy.

*Conservatism Revisited* was well received on both sides of the Atlantic. In September 1954, when the *Times Literary Supplement* devoted an issue to "American Writing Today," Viereck and Reinhold Niebuhr received by far the lengthiest attention of the several hundred writers discussed. But as postwar

American conservatism took shape in the mid- and late 1950s, Viereck's differences with the movement became pronounced. With Clinton Rossiter, John Lukacs, Robert Nisbet, and even Russell Kirk, Viereck could find much common ground. But there was little love lost between Viereck and the *National Review* circle, and Viereck looked askance at anyone on the Right who defended Sen. Joseph McCarthy.

In 1956, Viereck published a second book on conservatism, called simply *Conservatism: From John Adams to Churchill*. It's an evenhanded and elegant treatment with a thematic thread contrasting relatively more authoritarian continental traditions rooted in Joseph de Maistre with the milder Anglo-American conservatism of John Adams and Edmund Burke. Viereck takes pains to treat fairly those philosophies on the Right—such as William Graham Sumner's *laissez faire*—with which he disagrees. It is a book that even Viereck's critics ought to appreciate, though Meyer used the occasion of a review to read Viereck out of the movement. Claes Ryn was surely right to suggest that Meyer's "sweeping judgment was based not so much on the contents of the book, which were barely discussed, as on Meyer's general impression of Viereck as, at heart, a liberal in practical politics."

For his part, Viereck had already unleashed a salvo against the Right in his contribution to Daniel Bell's *The New American Right*, a collection most famous for Richard Hofstadter's essay locating the origins of right-wing populism in status resentment: "pseudo-conservatism is in good part a product of the rootlessness and heterogeneity of American life, and above all, of its peculiar scramble for status and its peculiar search for secure identity." Viereck argued almost exactly the same thing, prompting Frank Meyer to accuse him of "following T. W. Adorno, Richard Hof-

stadter and David Riesman." In fact, Viereck had come to his conclusions independently through his reflections on Nietzsche. "The entire status-resentment thesis" of his essay, he wrote, "is frankly borrowed—elaborated—from Nietzsche. He defined a sublimated '*ressentiment*' (he preferred the French term) as the basic, half-unconscious motivation of mass politics."

Viereck's 1956 book, *The Unadjusted Man*, reprinted several of his essays on the subject of right-wing populism, including the *New American Right* piece, and expanded upon the theme of status resentment and the ideological divide between the East Coast and the Midwest and Southwest—the Blue State-Red State split, though in Viereck's day the South had not yet joined the Right's coalition. Viereck described a phenomenon he called "transtolerance," which transformed racial and class animus into hatred of elites. "Not only economics but also ethnic and religious rivalries have become less important a base for status-resentment, and hence for thought-control nationalism, than social, educational, and sectional rivalries," he wrote. "The same American prosperity that has relaxed ethnic and religious resentments has intensified the competition for social and educational status."

Viereck devoted special attention in one chapter to the politics of Wisconsin and what he perceived as the genealogical link between Robert LaFollette and the Progressives and the later McCarthy movement. "The two Wisconsin movements shared six important and potentially dangerous characteristics," he wrote: "direct democracy, conspiracy-hunting, Anglophobia, Germanophilia, nationalistic isolationism, anti-elitist status-resentment." Viereck's own elite affinities surely colored his perceptions; even so, the parallels at the national level between what Progressivism wrought and what the popular conser-

vatism of recent years has achieved are hard to miss. In each case, the worst rose to the top: Progressivism gave us not Bryan or LaFollette, but Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Elite-bashing conservatism has given us not Robert A. Taft but George W. Bush. In each case, energetic—and bellicose—executives reaped the rewards of anti-establishment resentment.

As Claes Ryn has noted, Viereck never really considers whether there might be more substantial reasons for the rest of the country's resentment of the East Coast financial and political elite. And there certainly was a personal element to Viereck's defense of internationalist, Atlanticist, and WASP values. Viereck thoroughly rejected and reacted against his father's pro-German views. Yet for all that, there is much that is valid in Viereck's analysis of right-wing populism, which, with the values inverted, resembles Sam Francis's understanding of "Middle American Radicals." Viereck's antipathy toward populists of all stripes also resembled, as he was well aware, the high Federalist attitude toward the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian rabble.

Viereck's frustration with the character of the emerging conservative movement boiled over in his 1962 addition to *Conservatism Revisited*, the second "book," *The New Right—What Went Wrong?* He reiterated his objections to "the deracinating, technology-brandishing industrialists whose so-called freedom and progress is merely the economic 'individualism' of Manchester-liberal pseudo-conservatism," placing himself instead in the camp of "Tory Socialists" (in the aristocratic Shaftesbury-Disraeli-FDR-Stevenson tradition)." But Viereck also leveled his guns against other traditionalists, contending "today's conservatism of yearning is based on roots either never existent or no longer existent." He acknowledged "such a conservatism of nostalgia can still be of high literary value," and "it is also valuable

as an unusually detached perspective toward current social foibles. But it does real harm when it leaves literature and enters short-run politics, conjuring up mirages to conceal sordid realities or to distract from them."

For European-style, Maistrean reactionaries he had no patience at all: "Let them present their case frankly as anti-traditional, rootless revolutionaries of Europe's authoritarian right wing, attacking the deep-rooted American tradition of liberal-conservative synthesis." And Viereck was little less harsh, though at much greater length, in criticizing a traditionalist who was not a Maistrean: Russell Kirk, whom he accused of betraying Burkean conservatism by making common cause with the Goldwater movement (and its supposed thought-controlling nationalists, though Viereck allowed that the senator himself was milder than his supporters) and by failing to denounce Joe McCarthy. This, it must be said, was blatantly unfair: while Kirk never joined the chorus of condemnation against McCarthy—which even Viereck described as a "hysteria about hysteria"—Kirk's book *Academic Freedom* leaves no question about his disapproval of the "thought-controllers."

*The New Conservatism: What Went Wrong?* would be Viereck's last extended rumination on conservatism; thereafter he would devote his energies to poetry rather than politics. He continued to write occasional essays for the *New York Times* and other outlets, often on topics relating aesthetics to ethics. The continuing controversies over Ezra Pound were a frequent concern: Viereck considered Pound's work aesthetically corrupted by his moral evil, his anti-Semitism and support for the Axis powers. Two of Viereck's earlier books examined the relationship between art, morality, and power at length, *Dream and Responsibility* in 1953 and Viereck's first book, *Metapolitics*, originally published in 1941. The latter

remains to this day a penetrating study of the role of German Romanticism, as found in figures as diverse as the rabble-rouser Father Jahn and Richard Wagner, in paving the road to Nazism.

For his poetry and his literary-political writing, Viereck remains much admired by a small but influential following. The poet Dana Gioia has said that after 50 years *Terror and Decorum* "still lives and breathes." Claes Ryn has written extensively about Viereck's philosophy of art and politics. And one of Viereck's former students, Lisa Szefer, now a lecturer at Harvard, is at work on a biography. Most of his books remain in print.

For conservatives, however, Viereck presents several problems. Certainly the movement's mainstream has little esteem for him. He embodied "a kind of pre-neo-conservatism none of us had any use for," William F. Buckley told Tom Reiss in 2005. But Viereck was no neoconservative: he had none of their zeal for ideological crusading, first against communism and now for democratism. On the other hand, Viereck's anti-populism and his emphasis on civilization against culture and *Kultur*, the cosmopolitan over the localist, makes him a poor fit for the paleos. So the first postwar conservative, squarely in the tradition of John Adams and Disraeli, is an odd man out today.

But conservatives need not agree with everything Viereck wrote to find much of value in his work, even in his criticisms of the Right. He was an insightful critic, if perhaps a premature one, of the forces that have lately sidelined traditional small-government, prudential conservatism: jingoistic nationalism, the politics of social resentment, and a politicized religiosity. No, Viereck should not be taken as a guide in all things. But he does provide an antidote to the Romantic nationalism of the Bush era. ■

*Daniel McCarthy is senior editor of ISI Books.*

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[Once]

### A Melody in the Irish Air

By Steve Sailer

MUSICALS WON SIX Best Picture Oscars in the 1950s and 1960s but only one since (“Chicago” in 2002). Why aren’t movie musicals terribly popular anymore? Americans will often tell you that it’s just not realistic for somebody standing on a street corner to burst into song, accompanied by 100 violins.

Common as this criticism is, it’s a rather unpersuasive explanation because we’re perfectly happy with many other implausible artistic conventions. We seldom scoff that a novel’s omniscient third-person narrator presumes a point of view that only God enjoys; that stage plays are ridiculous because normal people don’t converse in complete sentences while all facing toward an invisible fourth wall; or that unlike in sitcoms families don’t actually sit around in vast living rooms cracking wise.

If lack of realism truly is the cause of the musical’s decline, then “Once,” a tiny Irish musical written and directed by John Carney, should win box-office success comparable to the enthusiasm it has inspired in critics. “Once” overcomes this common objection by giving its hero (played by an oversized red-headed teddy bear named Glen Hansard, the guitarist in the last Irish musical,

1991’s “The Commitments”) a practical reason to break into song on the sidewalk: he’s a street musician who does indeed routinely pour out his heart, as battered as his old acoustic guitar, to the passing multitudes. So the musical interludes in the film are perfectly plausible.

A flower girl tosses ten Euro cents into the busker’s guitar case, in return for which she feels entitled to inquire who this “you” is in all the singer-songwriter’s lovelorn lyrics. Finding out that his girlfriend has moved to London while he works in his Da’s vacuum cleaner repair shop, she shows up the next day dragging her malfunctioning Hoover like a cat being taken for a misguided walk. At the instrument store where a genial owner lets the girl play the piano, the two work on his songs.

Love blossoms but gets sublimated into making music. (The film’s R-rating is solely due to the inability of the modern Irish to utter a phrase without the word “fook” in it.) After a single rejected pass, his Irish sexual diffidence gets the better of him. And being a folk rock-strumming beta male, he’s a bit of a sap for this cute but unreadable girl who turns out to be a single mum. Or is her ex-husband in Prague even her ex at all? Anyway, on film, unconsummated relationships are the most romantic. “Once” is amply romantic.

The unanimously rapturous reviews that “Once” has garnered might stem more from how its minimalism is convenient for critics, who find it easy to write about stripped-down conceptual breakthroughs—The old stage musical is reinvented as a busker musical!—just as rock critics preferred the simplistic Ramones to grandiose Led Zeppelin. In

truth, a great musical, such as “Singin’ in the Rain,” is overstuffed with delights that “Once,” as pleasing as it is, definitely lacks.

I suspect the decline of the musical, though, was not really due to a sudden demand for naturalism among audiences, who had no problem enjoying absurdly surrealistic music videos in the 1980s, but because electric guitars, which aren’t suited to musical theater because they drown out lyrics, came to dominate radio from the 1960s onward. It takes a number of hearings to learn to appreciate new melodies, so without the chance to hear a show’s tunes on the air beforehand, the musical came to be at a disadvantage.

“Once” gets around this problem by repeating each original song several times. Moreover, most of Hansard’s compositions feature similar sing-songy alternations of high and low notes, so the melodies all sound a lot alike. The “Once” soundtrack won’t make anybody forget “Oklahoma,” but it’s a reasonably effective solution to the modern musical’s lack of radio exposure.

“Once” is set among the marginally employed in prosperous contemporary Dublin, thronged by immigrants. It’s gladdening to see long-suffering Ireland, which once sent forth her hungry children to the ends of the earth, now wealthy enough to attract the poor of the world. And yet, watching Ireland hurrying toward a postmodern Euro-blandness in which it becomes so diverse that it’s just like everywhere else in Europe, I fear we’ll miss the Irish Ireland when we eventually realize it’s gone. ■

Rated R for language.



## BOOKS

[*The Last Days of Europe: Epitaph for an Old Continent*, Walter Laqueur, Thomas Dunne Books, 256 pages]

# How the West Was Lost

By Theodore Dalrymple

FLYING TO ROTTERDAM recently, the largest and busiest port in the world, I was forcibly struck by the aerial view. I doubt there is a sight anywhere that is more eloquent testimony to the power of human intelligence and organization. Indeed, this applies to the whole of the Netherlands: a physically unpromising fragment of land, much of it reclaimed from the sea, has been diligently transformed into one of the globe's most flourishing regions, whose economic product exceeds that of the whole of Africa.

The text accompanying a book of photographs of the Dutch landscape that I was given as a present is an unconscious witness to the country's wealth. Extolling Dutch society's fundamental egalitarianism, the text stated that in Holland you will not see expensive cars, only middle-of-the-range models. The examples given were Mercedeses and BMWs.

The Dutch are probably the best-educated people in the world (though middle-aged people complain, as everywhere else, that standards are falling). Many Dutch have a vocabulary in English that exceeds that of native speakers in Britain and America. And for many years, the Dutch prided themselves that theirs was a country in which nothing ever happened. The business of Holland was business—plus social security with a bit of anti-Calvinist decadence thrown in. The country was so tranquil, contented, and firmly established that, fail-

ing a rise in the level of the North Sea, it seemed the idyll would continue forever.

But a couple of political assassinations, unprecedented in Holland for more than 300 years, suddenly illuminated, as if by a flash of lightning, a darker aspect of reality—one that was not confined to Holland but was Europe-wide. In a very short space of time, complacency gave way to a nagging sense of doom.

It is Europe's doom that Walter Laqueur explores and explains in this succinct and clearly written book. He does not say anything that others have not said before him, but he says it better and with a greater tolerance of nuance than some other works on this vitally important subject.

There are three threats to Europe's future. The first comes from demographic decline. Europeans are simply not reproducing, for reasons that are unclear. They seem to care more about the ozone layer and carbon emissions than they do about the continuation of their own societies. Or perhaps bringing up children interferes with what they conceive to be the real business of life: taking lengthy annual holidays in exotic locations and other such pleasures.

The second threat comes from the presence of a sizable and growing immigrant population, a large part of which is

in Birmingham, for example, I found a women-only table occupied exclusively by young Muslims dressed in the *hijab*. (They were the lucky ones, members of liberal households that allowed them out on their own.)

The third threat comes from the existence of the welfare state and the welfare-state mentality. A system of entitlements has been created that, however economically counterproductive, is politically difficult to dismantle: once privileges are granted, they assume the metaphysical status of immemorial and fundamental rights. The right of French train drivers to retire on full pension at the age of 50 is probably more important to them than the right of free speech—especially that of those who think that retirement at such an age is preposterous. While Europe mortgages its future to pay for such extravagances—the French public debt doubled in ten years under the supposedly conservative Chirac—other areas of the world forge an unbeatable combination of high-tech and cheap labor. The European political class, more than ever dissociated from its electorate, has hardly woken up to the challenge.

All this Laqueur lays out with exemplary clarity. He sees Europe, once the home of a dynamic civilization that energized the rest of the world, declining into a kind of genteel theme park—if it's

**THERE ARE PARTS OF BRUSSELS WHERE THE POLICE ARE ENJOINED NOT TO BE SEEN EATING OR DRINKING DURING RAMADAN.**

not necessarily interested in integration. As the population ages, the need for immigrant labor increases, and among the main sources of such labor are North Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. When I recently drove to Antwerp from the South of France, I thought I had arrived in Casablanca. There are parts of Brussels where the police are enjoined not to be seen eating or drinking during Ramadan. Similar accommodations are occurring all over Europe: in the Central Library

lucky. The future might be grimmer than this, of course: there might be a real struggle for power once the immigrants and their descendents become numerically strong enough to take on the increasingly geriatric native population.

As is to be expected in a relatively short book, the author does not explore matters in great depth. One interesting and important question is why Europeans have abjectly surrendered to the dishonest nostrums of multiculturalism. Why, for example, can a couple of Dutch

children be told by their teacher to remove the Dutch flag from their school bags because it might offend children of Moroccan descent—who, it should be noted, are supposed to be Dutch citizens? Why, when I arrive in regional airports in Britain, do I see signs for British passport holders written in Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, and Hindi scripts, presumably for the benefit of British citizens who cannot read the Latin alphabet? Why do German courts rule that beating women is a religious right for Turks, just as terms such as “illegitimate children” have been banned from official usage as being denigratory and stigmatizing?

The answer surely lies in the shame of Europe’s recent past. The Dutch, for example, are aware that not only did many of them (or their parents and grandparents) collaborate enthusiastically with the Nazi occupiers, but no sooner was Holland liberated than it engaged in a bloody colonial war to try

to retain the East Indies. Under these circumstances, reference to the extraordinary positive achievements of the country came to seem like chauvinism or worse, and no pride in Dutchness could be communicated to immigrants. The same, *a fortiori*, applies to Germany and even to Britain, whose enormous achievements intellectuals have long been deconstructing.

Only the French, with their republican model, have gone in for a salutary monoculturalism, but unfortunately their economic and social policies helped, if not to create, at least to maintain Muslim ghettos. On one hand, the children of immigrants were told they were French; on the other, they were *de facto* excluded from the rest of society. Ferocious resentment was the result, and to coin a phrase, we ain’t seen nothing yet.

Laqueur makes the important point that shortcomings of the host countries notwithstanding, many immigrant groups have thrived without difficulty. He might have added that they have all successfully overcome initial prejudice against them. There is no Sikh or Hindu problem in Britain; the country has recently absorbed half a million Poles without any obvious tension or difficulty. (Tony Blair, with his usual perspicuity, predicted that when Poland joined the European Union, 13,000 Poles would move to Britain.)

This suggests—and Laqueur has no hesitation in so saying—that there is a problem peculiar to the integration of Muslims in Western countries, at any rate, when they are in such large numbers that they are able to make whole areas their own. Imbued with a sense of their own religious superiority, which considers a Muslim way of life better than any other, they are ill-prepared to adapt constructively to Western society.

Yet adapt they do, though not necessarily in the best way. The young men of the second generation adopt many aspects of American ghetto “culture,” which in conjunction with Islamic teaching and tradition, enables them to dominate women in a way that is to

them extremely gratifying. This prevents the women (who, as Laqueur tells us, and I can confirm from personal experience, are vastly superior morally and intellectually to their menfolk) from achieving all they might in an open society. In turn, the cheap and unconstructive satisfactions of domestic dictatorship discourages Muslim men from real achievement and engagement in the wider society around them. For the majority of young men of Muslim descent in Europe, the chief attraction of Islam is the justification it offers for the ill-treatment of women.

Is a “clash of civilizations” within Europe thus inevitable at some time in the future? Laqueur is cautious, as befits a man who has seen so much that was unprecedented in his own lifetime. Secularization, if only of a strange and not altogether reassuring kind, has already made deep inroads into the Muslim population. On the other hand, it may be that this very secularization is what calls forth religious fanaticism as a response. After all, Muslims can see in European Christianity an example of what happens when the light of reason and historical criticism is allowed into the purlieus of religious doctrine: it falls apart. Since Islam is so much a part of the identity of people wherever it has predominated, an attack on Islam, even or especially in the form of rational criticism, provokes an existential crisis.

Laqueur is neither apocalyptic nor optimistic but measured and open-minded about the future. Yet given the earnest frivolity of the European political classes, who face up to and legislate for every problem except the serious ones, it is likely that his prediction for Europe is accurate: it will sink into insignificance, more important, it is true, than Africa but no more important than Latin America.

Actually, I like Latin America. ■

*Theodore Dalrymple is the author, most recently, of Our Culture, What’s Left of It: The Mandarins and the Masses and Romancing the Opiates: Pharmacological Lies and the Addiction Bureaucracy.*

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[Counterpoints: 25 Years of The New Criterion on Culture and the Arts, edited by Roger Kimball and Hilton Kramer, Ivan R. Dee, 512 pages]

## Where Criticism is Still an Art

By R.J. Stove

THIS BOOK TEMPTS a reviewer to turn his entire critique into a disclosure of interests. It also forces him to slough his squeamishness about first-person usage, a device Orwell correctly compared to “dosing yourself with some stimulating but very deleterious and very habit-forming drug.” *The New Criterion* has printed articles of mine in the past and will, I hope, do so again. Obviously I am not going to endanger this working relationship by comprehensively trashing the magazine’s hardcover spin-off. Yet an exhibition of toadying would be even duller to read than to write. (It is fit, though, to cite here a friend of Max Beerbohm’s, who allegedly said, “I like flattery, so long as it is sufficiently fulsome.” Beerbohm’s devastating rejoinder: “I impose no conditions at all.”) At best, a reviewer can merely combine candor about his background with detachment about the work under discussion. He should assess its merits and defects as if all *New Criterion* staffers were strangers to him. Amiable strangers, he trusts, but strangers nonetheless.

Honesty obliges the admission that during my youth I generally avoided the magazine. Back then, I judged publications by a simple yardstick. If they ran material like P.J. O’Rourke’s “How to Drive Fast On Drugs And Not Spill Your Drink,” I applauded them; if not, not. Since *The New Criterion* did not, I had little time for it. Eventually, *mirabile dictu*, one puts away childish things (unless one is O’Rourke himself, who on his own admission “bought more expensive childish things”). In my case, two gruesome family tragedies blew apart

what would otherwise have collapsed more slowly: that is, the entire hovel of semi-literate, consequence-free, protracted-pubescent heathenism in which I had previously dwelt. What had once seemed tedious and hectoring suddenly seemed urgently readable, including *The New Criterion*’s best articles. (The periodical also began championing philosopher-essayist David Stove; at times I still fear that my own *New Criterion* appearances have derived purely from being David Stove’s son.)

Subsequent exposure to Waugh, Belloc, C.S. Lewis, Arnold Lunn, Fulton Sheen, Joseph Sobran, and Russell Kirk—Kirk, in particular, left much the same impact on my thinking that a dozen jalapeños would leave on the roof of one’s mouth—confirmed that when it came to my erstwhile atheist home, “you can’t go home again.” From these authors above all, I learned that the West’s chief dividing line, far from being Right versus Left, was that of Christendom versus barbarism. A single cautionary sentence of Waugh annihilated the whole good pagan alibi: “It is no longer possible, as it was in the time of Gibbon,

proclaims, “is the one thing *The Conservative Mind* is not ... [it] isn’t history; it is a work of literature meant to achieve political ends.” Anyone who believes that Kirk wrote *The Conservative Mind* as an exercise in GOP instrumentalism, or that its original readers in their tens of thousands bought the book as such, will, in the Duke of Wellington’s words, believe anything. In Frum’s eyes, Kirk’s main fault would appear to consist of not being Frum. This offense, if offense it be, most observers will find eminently pardonable.

Similar solipsism informs Mark Steyn’s anti-European tirade “It’s the Demography, Stupid.” Although Steyn scores some points, all those were made years earlier by serious demographic thinkers—Alexis Carrel, Alfred Sauvy, Colin Clark, and B.A. Santamaria, to list a few—who worried over Europe’s birth dearth and dysgenics decades before Steyn showed the smallest concern for the topic. One misses in his chest-thumping prose any avowal of his predecessors’ existence. One also misses any positive reasons to deplore European implosion, as distinct from the purely

IN FRUM’S EYES, KIRK’S MAIN FAULT WOULD APPEAR TO CONSIST OF **NOT BEING FRUM**. THIS OFFENSE MOST OBSERVERS WILL FIND **EMINENTLY PARDONABLE**.

to accept the benefits of civilization and at the same time deny the supernatural basis on which it rests.” The present book’s introduction acknowledges another Waugh aphorism: “Unstinting effort is needed to keep men living together at peace; there is only a margin of energy left over for experiment however beneficent.” Kirk could have said the same things.

As it happens, *Counterpoints* includes an exceptionally disappointing interpretation of Kirk by David Frum, and woe to any reader whose first exposure to Kirk (or to *The New Criterion*) derives from this source. While the essay does not altogether lack insight, its dismissal of Kirk’s *Conservative Mind* proves simply bizarre. “History,” Frum grandly

negative reason of fearing imams. What chances are there of halting this implosion while contraceptives—prohibited, before 1930, by every Christian church—are allowed? How exactly can Europe’s sexual revolution, and its practitioners’ alleged rights (Portugal being the latest country to legalize abortuaries), be stopped without at least a short-term alliance with sane Muslim leaders, in lieu of any more palatable enemy’s enemy? These are important questions that Steyn, far from answering, is incapable of even addressing. Quoting, as Steyn does, the babble of pro-abort hoydens like Cameron Diaz cannot substitute for hard, unfashionable cerebration. Steyn is better when dealing with Broadway’s chronicles. Happily, *Counterpoints* also

includes a graceful tribute by him to the centenary dramatist-impresario George Abbott.

In certain other selections the problem is not solipsism but lack of clarity. No one can doubt Enoch Powell's importance in British conservative history, nor does Roger Scruton's meditation on Powell dispute it; but repeatedly Scruton is just confusing. Why does he describe Powell's political attitude as a "fantasy vision of Britain" and "a noble lie"? Is he charging Powell with mendacity—the very last sin most would attribute to him—or with self-deception? Where is the evidence for maintaining that the England of Powell's

purging of "dead white males." Such behavior (like the Leavisite deification of D.H. Lawrence) may well have psychiatric interest; but conservatism it is not, never was, and never will be.

Fortunately, much of *Counterpoints* achieves a higher level. It has been necessary to dilate on the book's failings in order to conclude with a proper appreciation of its virtues. Of all *Counterpoints*' contributors, political scientist Kenneth Minogue—whom Kirk publicly praised in 1986—probably has the largest innate authorial gift. His long essay "Christophobia and the West" is consistently worth reading, with its gently ruthless analyses of what he calls

have sometimes done paid work for Dr. Franklin over recent years) has sharp and effective things to say about Thomas Kuhn's scientific irrationalism, though I find myself unsure if Kuhn's dogma is as tempting to real thinkers—rather than, say, sociologists in graduate school—as one might gather from Franklin's warning.

The best things in *Counterpoints* are the non-political encomia to figures who, while not forgotten exactly, are in practice better known nowadays by their names than by their works. Want a painstaking guide to Paul Valéry's importance in French literature? Joseph Epstein's article is ideal in this regard, with especially felicitous analogies regarding Valéry's grave yet chaste style: "No trombones, no trumpets, no brass section in Valéry's prose; a solo cello, deep strings played under perfect control and superior acoustical conditions, is all we ever hear." Ever wondered about what performing and creative contributions Sir Donald Tovey, the eloquent and shrewdly droll Scottish musicologist, made to music? Look no further than James F. Penrose's masterly rundown. Curious what John Buchan produced other than *The 39 Steps* and *Greenmantle*? Read Roger Kimball's overview of Buchan's output, although Kimball's homage to P.G. Wodehouse (not included here) is still better. Those more competent than I am to evaluate any reportage on architecture and ballet will doubtless benefit more than I do from Michael Lewis's study of Stanford White and Laura Jacobs's of George Balanchine, but even I can tell that as critical comment these pieces are unusually assured and thoughtful. Ultimately it is because *The New Criterion* can publish such profiles as these that it chiefly appeals to some of us; and *Counterpoints*, issued to celebrate the magazine's silver jubilee year, does include enough high-grade material to make a useful gift for an intelligent, suitably skeptical, college student. ■

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### THE BEST THINGS IN *COUNTERPOINTS* ARE THE NON-POLITICAL ENCOMIA TO FIGURES WHO ARE BETTER KNOWN NOWADAYS BY THEIR NAMES THAN BY THEIR WORKS.

imagination was already dead by 1968, or that, in Scruton's astoundingly relativist words, "a lie that is believed is not really a lie"? Would a mere nostalgia-peddler have been calumniated as Powell was? No clue is provided. Confronted with such unsubstantiated philosophical assertions, I recall Steve Sailer's sardonic 1999 reference to "the Grand Tradition of Western Philosophy: namely, almost 100% fact-free."

Nor does Oxford teacher Paul Dean—whose brilliant 1997 article on Monsignor Ronald Knox is among the best things *The New Criterion* has ever published—show to much advantage in *Counterpoints*, where he endeavors at length to defend literary cult leader F.R. Leavis (1895-1978). Perhaps in a largely Leavis-free zone like America, such defenses will be welcomed; those among us of a certain age whose university education occurred within the former British Empire know better. When Leavis and his original disciples rewrote the entire English literary canon on no firmer spiritual pretext than their own boorishly parochial whims, they anticipated in elaborate detail the 1980s' and 1990s' Black Power and femocrat apparatchiks, with their endless

"Olympians." ("Olympians think in the long term. They have, after all, been working on the project since Woodrow Wilson.") Its final admonition: "Globalization is having very odd effects on our thinking, but none is more curious than the Olympian project of turning the West's cultural plurality into a homogenized rationalism designed for export to, and domination over, the rest of the world." Would that Frum could be made to write that sentence out several thousand times.

Elsewhere in *Counterpoints*, David Pryce-Jones administers a long overdue thrashing to the morally and intellectually bankrupt Marxist "historian" Eric Hobsbawm, who—along with his even more squalid *confrère*, the late Stalinist sycophant Christopher Hill—poisoned British academic historiography for a generation. Hobsbawm's counterpart in the field of race warfare, Frantz Fanon, is given a similarly overdue—and on occasion downright witty—serve by Anthony Daniels: "He [Fanon] was so beguiled by the fact that he had had an original thought that he could not bear to give it up merely because it was wrong." Australian mathematician James Franklin (disclosure time again: I



[*A Mormon in the White House? 10 Things Every American Should Know about Mitt Romney*, Hugh Hewitt, Regnery Publishing, 311 pages]

## Managing Expectations

By W. James Antle III

This isn't the first time a successful businessman and Republican governor named Romney has launched a serious presidential bid. The outcome of that campaign was best described by long-time Ohio Gov. Jim Rhodes: "Watching George Romney run for the presidency was like watching a duck try to make love to a football."

Forty years later, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney has several advantages his father lacked: he leads the Republican presidential field in fundraising, has built an impressive national campaign organization, and has mostly received favorable coverage from the conservative press. And that's without even mentioning his hair. Yet Romney has so frequently struggled to put these assets to good use that Rhodes's crude analogy once again seems apt. This time the problem isn't brainwashing but overselling: Romney's supporters appear determined to spin a plausible candidate into a punch line.

*A Mormon in the White House?: 10 Things Every American Should Know about Mitt Romney*, by conservative commentator and Chapman University law professor Hugh Hewitt, is a good example of this problem. If it were actually a piece of Romney campaign literature, it would merely be overdone. As independent political analysis, the book is embarrassing. The Mormon issue is the only one of Romney's political liabilities Hewitt seriously grapples with—unless you consider being "too perfect" a real problem—and the reader has to wade through nine chapters of hagiography to get to this important discussion.

Hewitt opens a section on the candidate's disadvantages by noting, "Mitt Romney is handsome, articulate—even eloquent—well tailored, married to an attractive woman, and father to five all-American boys." The chapters about this "Christmas card family" and Romney's accomplishments in the business world would make for better reading if the author didn't try so hard to turn his book into a joint episode of "The Apprentice" and "Father Knows Best."

We're told that as a business consultant, Romney discovered "everything begins with smart people." Elsewhere we learn that like many "achievement-oriented dads of that era," Mitt taught his children that "work was important." Another Hewitt observation: "Character matters to Romney, a lot, and that will no doubt be a theme of his campaign."

Much of *A Mormon in the White House?* is drawn from softball interviews with Romney and the people closest to him. Hewitt penetratingly asked Romney's sons how smart their dad is. "Off the charts," Josh Romney replied. Hewitt says he "voiced [his] skepticism" when Tagg Romney talked about his father's generosity, "but Tagg was adamant."

HEWITT OPENS A SECTION ON THE **CANDIDATE'S DISADVANTAGES** BY NOTING, "MITT ROMNEY IS HANDSOME, ARTICULATE, WELL TAILORED, MARRIED TO AN ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, AND FATHER TO FIVE ALL-AMERICAN BOYS."

Behind Hewitt's cloying prose, Romney actually does have an interesting story. After graduating from a joint JD/MBA program offered at Harvard's law and business schools, he climbed the corporate ladder in the consulting business. Romney co-founded a venture-capital firm that helped launch hundreds of companies, including Staples and Domino's Pizza. In 1990, he returned, this time as CEO, to his old consulting firm, Bain & Co., and helped it avert financial collapse.

Guiding troubled institutions away from financial catastrophe became

Romney's calling. He helped restore solvency to the 2002 Olympics Winter Games, turning a \$379 million revenue shortfall into a \$100 million profit. Republicans then persuaded him to return to Massachusetts to run for governor, bumping aside acting Gov. Jane Swift. Romney was able to extend the GOP's hold on the governorship of the most Democratic state for another four years and managed to transform a \$3 billion deficit into a \$1 billion surplus, mostly through spending restraint (although some of the fee hikes and loophole closings look suspiciously like tax increases).

For his presidential run, Romney could have chosen to emphasize his fiscal acumen and penchant for problem solving. This Harvard MBA certainly has better management and public-speaking skills than the current president. Instead, Romney has chosen to campaign as the conservative litmus-test candidate despite his generally moderate Massachusetts record. Now when people talk about dramatic Romney-engineered turn-arounds, they are usually referring to his political flips rather than his rescues of the Olympics and Bain. He has been grilled for inconsistencies on the 2003 Bush tax cuts, gun control, amnesty for

illegal immigrants, antidiscrimination laws for homosexuals, campaign finance reform, a secret timetable for withdrawal from Iraq, and most critically, abortion. Hewitt, on the other hand, is consistent in downplaying these controversies.

While he does concede that "Mitt Romney's abortion views *have changed* in the past dozen years," Hewitt offers two seemingly contradictory explanations for his man's shift: Romney realized he couldn't win in Massachusetts as an "ardent pro-life activist" and also underwent a sincere change of heart. Hewitt additionally praises Romney

both for keeping his promise not to change Massachusetts's liberal abortion laws and for compiling a pro-life record while governor.

Sound confusing? In Hewitt's defense, pro-lifers and pro-choicers alike have been trying in vain to decipher Romney's abortion beliefs ever since his failed Senate race against Ted Kennedy 13 years ago. The candidate's strange relationship with Massachusetts Citizens for Life, the commonwealth's largest anti-abortion organization, demonstrates how difficult this can be. The group endorsed Romney in 1994, citing his support for parental-notification laws and opposition to taxpayer-funded abortions and a federal statute codifying *Roe v. Wade*. He later reversed or modified most of these positions. A campaign spokesman absurdly claimed Massachusetts Citizens for Life actually endorsed Romney because they admired the consistency of his pro-choice stance. In a 2002 debate immortalized on YouTube, Romney angrily denied ever accepting its endorsement. Before leaving office, he gave the group \$15,000.

Many presidential candidates have experienced leap-year abortion conversions, always conveniently in the direction of their party's platform. Romney has zigzagged left and right on the issue for over a decade. Rather than exploring this odd trajectory, Hewitt uncritically accepts Romney's own version of events. A politician who once movingly described

is like the overachieving college senior who can't resist padding an already commendable resume. Hewitt plays the role of the eager job-placement counselor.

Sometimes it is a real stretch. Hewitt contends that because Romney handled security at the post-9/11 Winter Olympics and did some grandstanding when the former president of Iran visited Massachusetts, he is qualified to lead the war on terrorism. For all their flaws, both Rudy Giuliani and John McCain (and for that matter, most of the Democratic candidates) have more convincing national-security credentials.

Hewitt similarly inflates Romney's record on conservative judges. Romney made some solid appointments to the Massachusetts appeals courts, but the *Boston Globe* reported that three quarters of his judicial picks statewide weren't even Republicans, much less conservatives. This reflected political reality—Romney's nominees had to be confirmed by an almost entirely Democratic body—but would be worth noting in a balanced account.

But not even Hewitt thinks Romney is invincible. He acknowledges that some voters may be jealous of the ex-governor's wealth. He also fears that workers laid off when Romney acquired their companies may come forward to elucidate the downside of the "Bain way." Ted Kennedy used these stories to great effect in 1994.

*Slate* editor Jacob Weisberg has asserted that anybody dumb enough to believe "an obvious con man" like Latter Day Saints' founder Joseph Smith shouldn't be president. In a cover story for *The New Republic*, Damon Linker worried that a Mormon president would be subservient to LDS church leaders. These concerns might be easier to take seriously if Mormons didn't have a long history of responsible participation in the American political process, as evidenced by Harry Reid, Orrin Hatch, Mo Udall, and George and Mitt Romney.

Hewitt argues convincingly that conservative Christians would err by rejecting Romney solely for theological reasons. Doing so would reinforce the view that social conservatives are religiously intolerant while legitimizing questions about the supernatural aspects of their own faiths that seem equally bizarre when seen through secularist eyes.

The Mormon material is the best in the book, but despite the title, Hewitt devotes more space to defending Romney's conservatism than his religion. And for good reason: Romney was a solid but unspectacular governor of a liberal state. The conservative things he tried to do, like resisting same-sex marriage, were often thwarted. The things he got passed, like his healthcare plan, were not unambiguously conservative. Romney is trying to run for president as someone he is not.

Perhaps it will work. Several polls show Romney surging in New Hampshire and Iowa, though he remains stuck in single digits elsewhere. In a field dominated by people who say many things conservatives dislike, maybe there is a market for a candidate who tells them what they want to hear. That is what Hewitt—whose past recommendations to conservatives include Gerald Ford, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Arlen Specter, and Harriet Miers—is selling.

But if the campaign falters, better to chalk it up to the voters' envy and anti-Mormon bigotry than a failure to close the sale. ■

*W. James Antle III is associate editor of The American Spectator.*

## ROMNEY IS LIKE THE OVERACHIEVING COLLEGE SENIOR WHO CAN'T RESIST PADDING AN ALREADY COMMENDABLE RESUME.

becoming pro-choice when a family friend died from an illegal abortion now says he became pro-life after hearing a scientist use the word "destroy" while talking about stem-cell research (an account the scientist disputes).

Who wouldn't question this? The same partisans who think it is perfectly natural for a one-time booster of assault-weapon bans to suddenly announce he is a (very recent) lifetime NRA member and a (very occasional) hunter of varmints. Romney

In the tenth chapter, Hewitt finally turns to the question on the jacket cover: do the American people want an adherent of the Mormon faith in the White House? The answer of a substantial minority appears to be no. Up to 43 percent tell pollsters they wouldn't vote for a Mormon. This includes both secular liberals, who dislike the Mormons' alien traditions and conservative politics, and Christian traditionalists (especially evangelicals), who reject Mormonism as heresy.

# Buying Trophies



I always used to cheer for Uncle Sam's team where international sports were concerned. The bad old Soviets, we were told, used illegal drugs

and turned hairy male shot putters into women, depriving pretty American college girls from winning gold in the Olympics. It used to make me furious, especially when professional hockey players from the Soviet Union would play amateur Yankee kids in hockey and rub their noses on the ice. Then Lake Placid happened and I felt better. But not for long. I watched the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles and was appalled by the professionalism involved in what back then was supposedly an amateur competition. I thought of Valery Borsov, the great Russian sprinter of the '70s, and his victories seemed somehow worthier than those of American and Canadian sprinters during the '80s. What was going on for me to feel as unpatriotic as I did? Just ask Barry Bonds.

Borsov's head did not literally expand, nor did Sergei Bubka's, the greatest pole vaulter ever. Both were intelligent enough to know that steroids kill. Both were great champions who did not try to get rich overnight, nor did they listen to unscrupulous coaches who urged them to dope. Borsov and Bubka no longer compete, of course, but if they did, I sure would be rooting for them and to hell with Uncle Sam's puffed up preeners. The Atlanta Olympics of 1996 have to go down as the worst in history.

In its second appearance, the Dream Team—made up of professional NBA players—won gold but not before a behemoth multi-millionaire by the name of Barkley elbowed a starving Angolan to the ground while piling on the score.

Sportsmanship as an Olympic ideal had taken a holiday.

Next year in Beijing there will be more of the charade, but I stopped caring long ago. Professionals do not inspire me. The amateur who glories in his effort does. Personally I like individual sports. College wrestling, judo, karate, boxing, tennis. One goes in alone and has no one to blame if he loses.

When I used to play polo back in the early '70s, each team had a fat cat who paid for the horses and cantered around the field while the rest of us charged up and down risking our necks. If we won, the big shot would collect the prize, have his picture taken holding the cup, and brag about his victory later on in some nightclub. He was and is a necessary part of polo unless all four players

IF WE WON, THE BIG SHOT WOULD COLLECT THE PRIZE, HAVE HIS PICTURE TAKEN HOLDING THE CUP, AND BRAG ABOUT HIS VICTORY LATER ON IN SOME NIGHTCLUB.

who make up the team are rich. It's as simple as that. Sport is expensive, and only the rich used to be able to compete—which brings me to the point of my story.

A couple of weeks ago, competing in the most expensive sport in the world, the world's eleventh richest man, Ralph Ellison of Oracle renown, was eliminated in the America's Cup sailing competition off Valencia, Spain. I exulted as never before. The team that eliminated the Oracle boat was Luna Rossa, an

Italian syndicate whose skipper and owners I do not know. But I do know Ellison.

The megalomaniac businessman owns the largest gin palace in the world, *The Rising Sun*, a superyacht of such vulgarity and ugliness—there is a basketball court on deck—it would need a far greater wordsmith than yours truly to describe it accurately. Ellison, of course, sees himself as a sportsman, and picks up the tab—more than 300 million big ones—for a challenge.

The America's Cup is the greatest trophy in sailing. Until recently, men who challenged skippered their own boats—the great Briggs Cunningham, Buss Mosbacher, Dennis Conner, to name a few. Ellison is a passenger on board during the racing, but had his Oracle team won, he would have been the one to hold the famous cup in his greedy lap. Mind you, the defender of the cup, Ernesto Bertarelli, a Swiss pharmaceutical heir, is no better, although he does have a very

pretty English wife. He, too, uses New Zealander, American, and British seamen, but I am told he was allowed to touch the rudder once when far ahead.

This is what sport has come to: billionaires posing as great sportsmen. I suppose most of those who race horses feel the same way as some of the old salts employed by these billionaires do, but jockeys, after all, do steer the horses while their owners sit in the stands. Not in the America's Cup. Sport sure ain't what it used to be. ■

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